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THE EMERGENCE OF BUREAUCRATIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN A STATE EDUCATION AGENCY:

A CASE STUDY OF CONNECTICUT'S EDUCATION REFORM
INITIATIVES

A Dissertation Presented

by

CATHERINE W. FISK

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 1999

Political Science

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IN A STATE EDUCATION AGENCY:

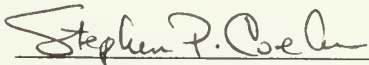
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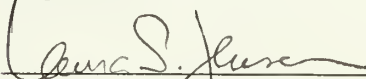
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A very special thank you goes to a dear friend, Justin, who proved to me that there is much more to life than working on a dissertation.

ABSTRACT

THE EMERGENCE OF BUREAUCRATIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN A STATE EDUCATION AGENCY:

A CASE STUDY OF CONNECTICUT'S EDUCATION REFORM INITIATIVES

FEBRUARY 1999

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This case study illustrates how agency bureaucrats within the Connecticut State Department of Education played a prominent role in crafting a comprehensive education policy agenda, launched by the Education Enhancement Act of 1986. This was an example of bureaucratically-driven state education reform in which leadership, a clearly articulated policy agenda, and a policy making model embedded in the notion of ideas and persuasion were instrumental in establishing, implementing, and sustaining that policy agenda over time. It is out of this case study that a theory of bureaucratic entrepreneurship emerges—that is, when non-elected public managers and professional staff devise successful strategies to persuade legislators and other constituency groups to accept their policy agenda, develop and sustain policy innovations over time, and devise policy instruments that rely on inducements and capacity-building to leverage changes in educational practice at the local school district level.

This case study examines bureaucratic entrepreneurship within two contexts. First, a comparison of two state-level education reform attempts is made: the first a successful bureaucratically-driven policy initiative culminating in the Education Enhancement Act (EEA) of 1986 and the second being a largely unsuccessful reform effort launched by the business community in the early 1990s through the Commission on Educational Excellence in Connecticut (CEEC). Second, the development and evolution of Connecticut's teacher standards initiatives, an outgrowth of the EEA of 1986, is examined to illustrate the prominent features of bureaucratic entrepreneurship, including the exercise of leadership, opportunistic behavior in the face of rapidly changing environmental circumstances, and engagement in "creative subversion" and risk-taking in order to pursue innovative research and development. This study concludes that (1) successful bureaucratically-driven education reform requires strong leadership and technical capacity, (2) bureaucratic entrepreneurship is critical to sustaining policy innovation over time, (3) bureaucratic entrepreneurs can be "grown" by creating a climate within an organization conducive to innovation, learning and group problem-solving and fostering conditions for "team entrepreneurship," that is, when a collection of individuals combine their efforts to produce innovations; and (4) there is a strong role to be played by state departments of education in shaping educational public policy.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE EMERGENCE OF BUREAUCRATIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN A STATE EDUCATION AGENCY

In the last two decades, state governments have become increasingly activist in formulating and implementing social policies—particularly in the area of public education. Since the mid-1980s, there has been a virtual “tidal wave” of educational reform initiatives coming from the states, led in many cases by state-level political actors such as legislators, governors and business interests.

Even though the states during the last decade have assumed an unprecedented role in directing policy and funding for public education reform, the tensions that have historically existed between the federal, state, and local roles in public education have continued. For example, the first Governor's Summit of 1990, convened by the Bush administration, produced a bipartisan initiative to establish national education goals that were to be achieved by the year 2000. Four years later, the Clinton administration's Goals 2000 initiative—which was an attempt to coordinate federal, state, and local strategies to meet the national educational goals—met with considerable controversy from political conservatives, who feared an overly intrusive federal role in education. The recession of the early 1990s also precipitated a reaction in some states against state government intrusion into local control of educational policies and practices. A number of states with Republican governors such as Governor Thompson in Wisconsin attempted to reduce state education agency activism by pruning state education codes, reducing state staff, and devolving policy control to local school districts (Wirt and Kirst, 1997). Advocates for

devolution of state control of education and more choice became more vocal, producing what Apple (1998) calls, “an odd combination of an emphasis on markets and ‘choice’ (weak state) on the one hand and an increasingly interventionist regulatory framework (strong state) that focuses on national curricula, national standards, and national testing, on the other” (p. 25). Timar (1997) attributes the current suspicion towards state-level authority in education to the tension between ideology and politics, and argues that large scale educational reform is unlikely in the absence of an institutional center such as state-level government to shape policy, to aggregate interests, and to control and channel conflict.

It is within this historical and policy context that Connecticut’s unique approach to education reform will be examined. This case study illustrates how agency bureaucrats within the Connecticut State Department of Education played a prominent role in crafting a comprehensive education policy agenda, which was launched by the Education Enhancement Act (EEA) of 1986. This study serves as an example of bureaucratically-driven state education reform in which leadership, a clearly articulated agenda, and a policy-making model embedded in the notion of ideas and persuasion were instrumental in establishing, implementing and sustaining that policy agenda over time. It is out of this case study that a theory of bureaucratic entrepreneurship emerges—that is, when non-elected public managers and professional staff (specifically in this case study, agency executive officials such as commissioners and deputy commissioners, bureau chiefs, and state education consultants) devise successful strategies to persuade legislators and other constituency groups to accept their policy agenda, develop and sustain policy innovations

over time, and devise policy instruments that rely on inducements and capacity-building to leverage changes in educational practice at the local level.

This case study examines bureaucratic entrepreneurship within two contexts:

(1) *By comparing two state-level education reform attempts:* the first a successful bureaucratically-driven policy initiative culminating in the Education Enhancement Act (EEA) of 1986, which created the statutory basis for the continued evolution of Connecticut's education improvement efforts; and the second being a largely unsuccessful reform effort launched by the business community in the early 1990s through the Commission on Educational Excellence in Connecticut (CEEC), which failed to produce legislative action and disbanded shortly thereafter. Each of these attempts at education reform are illustrative of two different models of leadership and policy-making: the former one in which state agency leadership, ideas and persuasion were central to crafting a successful policy agenda and in which agency bureaucrats functioned as policy entrepreneurs; and latter one in which competing, self-serving interests were striving for consensus with state agency bureaucrats providing little or no leadership.

(2) *By examining in depth the teacher standards initiatives that arose out of the EEA:* The development and evolution of Connecticut's teacher standards initiatives—in particular, the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program—are illustrative of some of the more prominent features of bureaucratic entrepreneurship, including the exercise of leadership, opportunistic behavior in the face of rapidly changing environmental circumstances, and engagement in “creative subversion” and risk-taking in order to pursue innovative research and development. The creation of a climate within the state agency conducive to innovation, learning and group problem-solving fostered conditions for “team entrepreneurship,” that is, a collection of individuals who combined their efforts to produce innovations.

This case study also illustrates the process by which the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) became a leader nationally in developing state-of-the-art educational accountability mechanisms such as student assessments (the Connecticut Mastery Test [CMT] and Connecticut Academic Performance Test [CAPT]), teacher assessments (in particular, the teacher portfolios developed in connection with the Beginning Educator

Support and Training [BEST] Program) and a comprehensive, state-wide accountability reporting system (the Strategic School Profiles). Only recently have states begun developing new systems of educational accountability that focus on outputs (results such as student performance indicators) rather than input (process) standards¹ (Cibulka and Derlin, 1998). In a 1994-95 study of standards-based reforms in nine states (California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota, New Jersey, South Carolina and Texas), Connecticut was cited as having integrated performance-based assessment into their statewide testing programs and one of only three states that was building the capacity of teachers to teach in ways that are compatible with these standards (Massell, Kirst and Hoppe, 1997). The effectiveness of different states' accountability mechanisms (defined as the use of educational indicators to track the progress of educational policy) was also evaluated in a recent study, in which nominations for examples of exemplary systems were solicited from national associations of state officials (including the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Governor's Association) and members of the U.S. Department of Education's State Accountability Study Group. Connecticut's approach to accountability, defined as an executive or state board of education model,²

¹ The old state educational accountability frameworks tended to be narrow and less ambitious. They often relied on norm-referenced tests with no stakes attached to performance and operated in isolation within the larger state policy system. Cibulka and Derlin (1998) point out that accountability policy will be accepted as authentic only if the results it produces, or seems likely to produce, are credible in the eyes of a variety of audiences (e.g., policy makers, administrators, teachers, parents, students and the public).

² Other approaches to state-wide accountability are legislative branch models, education-business partnerships, state-local partnerships, and third-party models.

was cited as outstanding. "Other state boards of education...have accountability systems; Connecticut's is simply the best, as judged by the nominators" (Wohlstetter, 1991, p. 32). Wohlstetter observes that, "the state board of education mechanism seems best suited to a context where strong local norms inhibit the creation of an independent accountability mechanism, but where the state has sufficient wealth to beef up department resources specifically for accountability activities" (p. 38).

The conditions which gave rise to the phenomenon of bureaucratic entrepreneurship in the CSDE emerged in connection with the initial development of these statewide accountability activities in the mid-1970s. Bureaucrats operating as policy entrepreneurs were largely responsible for the development and implementation of a statewide policy agenda focusing on standards and accountability that was launched by the Education Enhancement Act of 1986. Furthermore, bureaucratic entrepreneurship was largely responsible for the continuation of policy innovations in the areas of teacher and student assessment in the 1990s despite changes in top leadership in the agency and the unsuccessful reform proposals of the Commission on Educational Excellence in Connecticut (CEEC).

The evolution of Connecticut's teacher standards initiatives merit particularly close scrutiny in this case study because increasing the quality of the state's teaching force has been integral to Connecticut's reform agenda over the last two decades. Former Connecticut Commissioner of Education and current U.S. assistant secretary for elementary and secondary education, Gerald N. Tirozzi, referred to the EEA as establishing a "balanced equation" of higher teacher salaries coupled with increased

professional standards (Connecticut State Board of Education, 1992). Pecheone and Stansbury (1996) note,

In Connecticut, the induction of beginning teachers is seen from a policy perspective as a critical strategy to improve teaching and student achievement. The State Department of Education is attempting to link student learning standards to teaching standards that are used for both approval of teacher preparation programs and the licensure of beginning teachers. These efforts include legislative changes in licensure and teacher preparation program approval requirements, the development of curriculum guides, redesigned student assessments that clearly communicate desired student outcomes coupled with dissemination of teaching practices to produce those outcomes, and state-funded school improvement efforts to encourage the reorganization of schools (p. 164).

The ability of the Connecticut State Department of Education to put forth such a centralized policy agenda is particularly noteworthy, as the state historically has had strong norms of "home rule" and local control over educational policy.³ As this case study will suggest, a major factor in the agency's success in implementing its policy agenda was the careful selection of alternative policy instruments. The Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program, Connecticut's mandated induction program for beginning teachers, is particularly illustrative of an alternative tool of government action which combined the state's coercive power through its authority to license teachers with *incentives* (providing money to school districts to support the induction of new teachers as well as making available statewide high quality professional development), *capacity building* (training large numbers of beginning and experienced educators to understand principles of effective teaching practice as reflected in state teacher standards and

³ Norms of strong local control of education are partly due to the fact that Connecticut has 169 school districts and no administrative structures for regional governments. Connecticut is one of only three states without county government.

assessments), and *system-changing* mechanisms (placing teacher licensing decisions in the hands of practitioners trained by the state to assess beginning teachers, aligning state standards for approval of teacher preparation institutions with licensing standards for beginning teachers, and issuing state guidelines for local district evaluation of veteran teachers that reflect state standards for teachers). Furthermore, once the legal and regulatory framework for Connecticut's teacher induction and licensing policies was put into place, a group of agency specialists and middle managers who functioned as bureaucratic entrepreneurs were able to adapt the program to reflect shifting fiscal, environmental and political conditions.

Central Questions of Research

This research explores the following central questions:

- What is the nature of bureaucratically-driven education reform and bureaucratic entrepreneurship? Who has functioned in the role of "entrepreneur" and under what conditions did bureaucratic entrepreneurship arise?
- In what ways did bureaucratic entrepreneurship contribute to ongoing, sustained policy innovation in a period of significant changes in the state's economic, political and policy environment between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s?
- How is bureaucratic entrepreneurship related to a model of policy-making in which leadership, ideas and persuasion are central?

This study addresses the current gaps in the literature regarding the political influence of bureaucratic agencies in policy-making. As Wirt and Kirst (1997) note, the

traditional wisdom is that bureaucrats—particularly those in state education agencies (SEAs),⁴—have little policy-making influence.

Specialists in little niches of expertise, SEAs constitute a complex of daily spear carriers for curriculum, finance and accounting, administration, personnel and many other matters. Their political influence may be the most subtle, that of inertia defending the status quo. Their role in innovation and its implementation is one of the many unstudied aspects of the educational policy system (p. 240).

Much of the literature on bureaucratic policy-making focuses on bureaucrats as implementers and interpreters of policy, not as creators of policy. Kingdon (1995) notes that the power of bureaucrats is manifested in the activities of implementation as well as the specification of policy alternatives, but seldom in agenda-setting. Similarly, Hecl (1974) sees the critical role of civil servants as giving concrete substance to new policy initiatives, but seldom creating new policies *ex nihilo*.

On the other hand, the literature on policy implementation acknowledges that implementation cannot be divorced from policy, and that policy is effectively made by the people who implement it (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984; Lipsky, 1980; Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993; Nakamura and Smallwood, 1980). This case study of bureaucratically-driven education reform adds to the policy implementation literature by describing how bureaucrats skillfully crafted a policy agenda, which was ready to place in the hands of legislators and other policy makers when a “window of opportunity”

⁴ The terminology used to describe state education agencies varies in the literature. Sometimes they are termed “state education agencies” (SEAs), and sometimes “state departments of education” (SDEs). The terminology used predominantly here will be SDEs, with the Connecticut State Department of Education being referred to as the CSDE.

emerged. In this manner, agency personnel functioned as behind-the-scenes “policy entrepreneurs” (Mazzoni, 1995).

Kingdon (1995) describes “policy entrepreneurs” as advocates for proposals or for the prominence of an idea. They may be in or out of government, in elected or appointed office, in interest groups or in research organizations. Much of the literature around policy or political entrepreneurs examines individuals outside of government, but attention has also recently focused on “public entrepreneurs” or “bureaucratic entrepreneurs” (Fowler, 1994; Hebert and Link, 1988; Lewis, 1980; Polsby, 1984; Roberts and King, 1996). This typology of public sector entrepreneurs in the literature arises primarily from case studies of well-known public figures such as J. Edgar Hoover, Robert Moses, Hyman Rickover, Gordon Chase. What is missing from this literature, however, is an examination of less prominent or middle-level agency bureaucrats who, sometimes alone and sometimes as part of a team, have demonstrated the qualities of public entrepreneurs such as exercising leadership, mobilizing resources and public support, and behaving opportunistically in the face of rapidly changing political and economic conditions. Furthermore, this literature has not identified the conditions leading to the emergence of bureaucratic entrepreneurs, nor whether those conditions can be created purposefully.

Within the context of educational policy, this study also adds to the substantial literature documenting the failures of “top-down” education reform initiatives as well as the organizational and cultural impediments to changing practice in the classroom. “Systemic education” reform gained prominence in the early 1990s as an attempt to

address the shortcomings of the top-down reform mandates of the early 1980s as well as the content-free ambiguous nature of the “restructuring” reform movements of the late 1980s. The goal of systemic education reform was to overcome the lack of coherence between policy and practice caused by the fragmentation of the U.S. public school system.⁵ Most of the literature examining “systemic education reform” attempts of the past decade have failed to note the paradox inherent in systemic reform as a policy solution. First, systemic reform attempts to impact systematically and rationally all dimensions of an education system that is incontrovertibly a “loosely coupled” system staffed by “street level bureaucrats” (Lipsky, 1980). Second, “systemic reform” as a concept is nebulous and varies according to the purposes and predilections of its proponents. Consequently, it not surprising that recent studies of the effectiveness of “systemic reform” initiatives suggest that disjunctures continue to exist between the reform vision and current practice (Cohen and Hill, 1998), and that the causes are once again the fragmentation of educational governance structures and inadequate attention being given to teachers and teaching. As noted by Goertz, Floden and O’Day (1995) in their study of twelve reforming schools in six states, “[s]tate leaders must realize that setting out a framework for what should be taught in school will not result in much change if teachers do not know the content or how to teach it ... This was a theme across

⁵ Chapter Three discusses in more detail what has been described as the “three waves” of education reform since the early 1980s: the “first wave” which was a top-down, legalistic approach focusing on changing academic content and introducing higher standards for teachers; the “second wave” called “school restructuring” which promoted decentralization of authority and changes in the organization and management of schools; and the “third wave” which introduced “systemic education reform,” or a comprehensive approach to align policy approaches (curriculum, assessment and professional development) and governance structures to promote ambitious student outcomes.

schools, across districts, and across states in this study” (pp. 153-154). This study will propose an alternative view of policy-making that seems better suited to the loosely coupled nature of the educational system and its professional norms.

Summary of Conclusions of Research

This case study illustrates how the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) functioned as a political actor and decision-maker in the development, implementation, and subsequent evolution of the state’s education reform agenda. Such an activist role for a state education agency contrasts sharply with that of most state departments of education, whose activities and staffing revolve around policy implementation and monitoring of compliance. This case study also offers an alternative to a rational decisionist or production model approach to policy-making as inherent in the systemic reform movement by exploring the notion of politics and policy-making as persuasion and learning. It suggests that institutions such as state government can alter the understandings of policy issues and alternatives by exerting its power through the careful selection of policy instruments. By selectively choosing which parts of the system should be selectively leveraged (such as teacher quality), the state governments can combine their coercive power through accountability mechanisms (such as teacher licensing linked to demonstration of professional competencies through assessment) with their ability to offer inducements (such as higher teacher salaries) and capacity and system-changing mechanisms (such as training veteran teachers to understand principles of effective teaching practice and to serve as mentors and assessors of beginning teachers) in

order to alter the political climate as well as the culture of local schools and school districts. Furthermore, such a policy-making model based on persuasion and learning suggests that there are also alternative roles for bureaucrats. The combination of leadership, capacity-building, and empowerment of agency personnel within the CSDE created conditions conducive to the emergence and flourishing of “bureaucratic entrepreneurship” within the agency. Bureaucratic entrepreneurship, in turn, has been integral to sustaining policy innovation over time.

This case study suggests that five factors were instrumental in fostering an activist state agency role in education policy-making and the emergence of bureaucratic entrepreneurship: (1) leadership, (2) capacity-building within the agency, (3) empowerment of state agency personnel, (4) the creation of a learning organization within the agency, and (5) policy windows.

Leadership

Former Education Commissioners Mark Shedd and Gerald N. Tirozzi played pivotal roles in moving Connecticut’s teacher agenda forward in the late 1970s through the early 1990s. The agency’s ability to shape state education policy required leaders with vision who could shape the ideas and preferences of individuals both within and outside the agency. This case study shows that considerable political power and influence could be wielded by a commissioner of education who used the position as a “bully pulpit” to promote a policy agenda. In turn, talented people in the agency became leaders in their own right because they were supported and encouraged by strong leaders at the top. This

case study also illustrates that once a culture of policy activism and empowerment established itself within the agency, the locus of policy activism within the agency shifted to middle managers and professional staff who functioned as bureaucratic entrepreneurs. This phenomenon occurred in the mid-1990s, when the agency was led by a commissioner of education with a more traditional “state superintendent” style of leadership—that is, one in which consensus-building took priority over pushing for a statewide policy agenda.

Capacity-building Within the Agency

Mark Shedd, Commissioner of Education in the mid-1970s to early 1980s, created a legacy within the agency that persists to this day—specifically, that of an activist state agency that collects and reports data to local school districts and the public, conducts research and evaluation, and pursues an agenda of equity and excellence. Accordingly, the agency needed to be staffed by talented individuals with both broad policy expertise as well as technical knowledge. By actively recruiting individuals with specific technical knowledge and skills (and sometimes national reputations as scholars and researchers) instead of simply generalists and former school superintendents, the agency was able to conduct its own innovative research and development activities as well as establish itself as a credible and visible policy-making entity in the field.

Empowerment of Agency Personnel

This case study also illustrates how state agency personnel were empowered to develop and proactively implement innovative policies. Such a role for bureaucrats

contrasts sharply with traditional perceptions of bureaucrats or what is typically the practice in many other SDEs. Marshall, Mitchell and Wirt (1989) in their study of state education policy activity in California, admit that those who are in it for the long term, such as bureaucrats, may accrue long-term influence, but, by and large, their influence is less obvious. However, “[in] education, the one operational principle is that [state education agency] staff are not expected to initiate policy, to lobby directly for proposals, or to manipulate other policy groups” (p. 38). In contrast, in Connecticut, the State Board of Education and the legislature expected the agency to come forth with ideas and an aggressive policy agenda. This legacy of agency policy activism had its origins in the late 1970s and early 1980s, during which time agency staff were given the mission first by Mark Shedd, and later by Gerald Tirozzi, to come up with ideas and bring forth specific policy proposals. Later, when these proposals were adopted as part of legislation, the same staff were then given the charge to implement the policies. In this manner, an organizational culture was created in which individuals were not only encouraged to be innovative and forward-thinking, but also empowered to later put those ideas into practice.

Creation of a Learning Organization

The CSDE is highly unique in having created sufficient technical expertise within the agency to conduct state-of-the-art research in such areas as student and teacher assessment. Such research and development is normally undertaken by universities or large testing companies, not state agencies. In Connecticut, this unique role performed by

state agency bureaucrats was only possible because staff with specialized knowledge in research and measurement were aggressively recruited from around the country. It was also largely a matter of learning by doing, since the work that was being conducted in Connecticut in student and teacher assessment was ahead of its time and there were few, if any, models to emulate. A “learning organization” was created with the agency, in which “people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive forms of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together” (Senge, 1990, p. 3).

Policy Windows

Kingdon (1995) defines policy windows as opportunities for action on given initiatives that present themselves and stay open only for short periods. There is no question that the favorable economic and political climate in the early 1980s was instrumental in enabling the passage of legislation that simultaneously raised compensation and standards for teachers—essentially a political *quid pro quo*. Some have argued that, in the absence of a \$300 million surplus earmarked for education reform, the “balanced equation” of higher salaries and teacher standards in the Education Enhancement Act of 1986 would probably never have been passed. The “window of opportunity” that opened in the mid-1980s, however, was more than just the result of favorable economic times and the public’s concern over education following the release of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983. It was also the result of an agency that “proacted” with a coherent policy agenda to raise the status of the teaching profession rather than “reacted”

to the immediacy of the political moment. Leadership and capacity-building over the preceding decade had created a culture of bureaucratic entrepreneurship in the agency, which was instrumental in ensuring that the state's agenda of improving educational quality and equity would continue even when the state's financial situation grew shaky in the early 1990s. It was during that period that the credibility of agency personnel and agency programs with the legislature and other groups coupled with the momentum within the agency gained during the Shedd/Tirozzi days allowed for ongoing development and implementation of the country's most innovative teacher performance assessments. And this occurred *despite* the failure of the Commission on Educational Excellence in Connecticut to get its own agenda of higher teacher standards accepted by the legislature. In this sense, the agency helped "create" windows of opportunity which would not have otherwise existed.

Finally, this study suggests that entrepreneurship in a public agency need not be defined in terms of the appearance of one or two individuals within the organization, but rather in terms of the exhibition of entrepreneurial behavior by a group of individuals. Bureaucratic entrepreneurship can be, in effect, learned behavior as a result of creating an organizational culture in which innovation is encouraged and individuals are empowered to be leaders in their own right. Furthermore, the will to create and enact change and promote innovative practice can persist within an organization over time, even when the leadership at the top changes and the political winds shift. The lesson for educational policy makers—and policy makers in general—is that bureaucratic entrepreneurship can be created and nurtured by recruiting individuals into a bureaucratic organization with

specific technical expertise, promoting an organizational culture of “can-do-ism” and strategic risk-taking, and creating an entrepreneurial culture within the agency.

The conclusions of this research have implications for several areas of educational policy—including the effectiveness of state-level education reform efforts in general, whether there should be a strong state role in the formulation and implementation of educational policy, and the extent to which the education profession should be held accountable for the performance of its own members.

This case study presents strong evidence that state-level education initiatives can be successful in changing the behavior and beliefs of educators as well as the public. Although the characteristics of educational institutions as “loosely coupled” organizations staffed by teachers who function as “street-level bureaucrats” may contribute to the failure of “top-down” or regulatory reform models, the problem may be that most state-level policy makers fail to view policy-making as a means to motivate people to shift their thinking, values and beliefs. Connecticut’s experience illustrates that states have at their disposal different policy mechanisms that can alter the culture of a school and its teachers through appropriate incentives and accountability mechanisms. Integral to the success of these approaches is capacity-building at both at the state and local level. Capacity-building in this context means increasing the knowledge and skills of educators (state-level bureaucrats as well as classroom teachers) which enable them to make changes in their professional practices that align with what the current research says will increase student achievement.

This study also presents a case for a strong state role in the formulation and implementation of educational policy. The expanded state activism in educational reform and policy-making which erupted in the 1980s has continued for the most part into the 1990s. The economic recession of the early 1990s, however, resulted in the significant downsizing of state education agency staffing and functions in numerous states. The role of those state departments of education in setting educational policy remains uncertain in the latter part of this decade. It is important, however, to note that the size and influence of state-level authority in public education has ebbed and flowed periodically since the 19th century. This ambivalence towards a strong state role in education is rooted in the American resistance to state institution-building (for a more detailed discussion see Chapter Two). As noted at the beginning of this chapter, Timar (1997) argues that large scale educational reform is unlikely in the absence of an institutional center to shape policy, aggregate interests, and control and channel conflict. The Connecticut case study provides a potent illustration of how a state education agency functioned as a policy shaper in the mid-1980s, culminating in the successful passage of the Education Enhancement Act of 1986. In contrast, the state agency staff played only a marginal role in the business-led education reform attempts of early 1990s, and the politically fragmented agenda of the Commission on Educational Excellence in Connecticut collapsed under the weight of competing special interests.

Connecticut's approach to education reform, with emphasized raising teacher standards through its state licensing functions, also has significant implications for the current debate among educators and other policy makers regarding whether or not there

should be more centralized or state control of teacher policies, or whether the profession itself should be given more autonomy and participation in this process. This debate is sometimes described in terms of the conflict between a political versus a professional model of accountability. A political model assumes that the larger community and its elected representatives have a right not only to hold public institutions answerable, but to circumscribe or control their behavior. A professional model, in contrast, assumes that members of an occupation possess specialized knowledge and that, because their work poses complex and non-routine problems, they should be regulated by a code of ethics internal to the profession and be autonomous from external political control (McDonnell, 1994). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future in its report, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future* (1996), recommends that decision-making power over the teaching profession should be shifted away from state education agencies and local school boards towards private professional organizations. For example, responsibility for accreditation of teacher preparation programs should lie with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), independent professional standards boards should be established in all states; master teachers should be certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), and teacher licensing examinations should be developed by the Interstate New Teacher Support and Assessment Consortium (a program of the Council of Chief State School Officers). Recommendations to place accountability for the education profession in the hands of private, professional organizations are controversial within public education⁶, as

⁶ It should be noted that one of the principal arguments in favor of the establishment of professional standards boards for teachers is that the licensing and standards for such professions as law, medicine,

such as change can be perceived as a shift of power away from parents and elected representatives and a diminishing of accountability to “consumers” (Ballou & Podgursky, 1997). Connecticut’s teacher standards initiatives—in particular, the BEST Program—may offer an alternative approach that bridges the dichotomy between professional and political models of accountability. This is accomplished through the integration of the state’s authorized and accepted role to license teachers with practitioner participation in the development as well as implementation of the teacher licensing policies and practices.

In summary, this case study illustrates that bureaucratically-driven, state-level education reform in Connecticut was successful in producing a sustained education improvement effort, and that bureaucratic entrepreneurship played a significant role in the formulation as well as evolution of policy innovations, particularly in the context of Connecticut’s teacher standards initiatives. Furthermore, bureaucratic entrepreneurship emerged over a period of nearly two decades within the state education agency as a result of strong leadership, capacity-building within the agency, empowerment of agency personnel, and the creation of a learning organization. While policy windows—or opportunities for action on given initiatives—may present themselves only briefly, this study also suggests that an agency ready with innovative ideas at the right time and the capacity to adapt those ideas to circumstances may, in fact, *create* policy windows which might otherwise not exist.

Methodology of Study

The methodology for this research is an explanatory single case study. The unique nature of this case, along with my role as a state education consultant at the Connecticut State Department of Education over the last eleven years, has provided me with an unusual opportunity to explain the conditions under which policy innovation in Connecticut has evolved and been sustained over time.

A case study methodology seems particularly suitable to investigate issues of complexity like state-based education reform. Yin (1994) describes the case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context. The essence of a case study is to illuminate a *decision* or a *set of decisions*—why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result. Case studies are generalizable to theoretical propositions, but not to populations or universes. Thus, the investigator's goal is to expand and generalize theories and not to enumerate frequencies. Stake (1995) further elaborates that “[the] real business of case study is particularization, not generalization. We take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as to how it is different from others, but what it is, what it does. There is an emphasis on uniqueness, and that implies knowledge of others that the case is different from, but the first emphasis is on understanding the case itself” (p. 8). Van Evera (1997) describes the strength of a case study as its ability to predict the private speech and writings of political actors. “Often these predictions are singular to the theory that makes them; no other theory predicts the same thoughts or statements” (p. 54). Polsby (1984) rejects more causal methods for data collection when studying where new public policies originate.

Case studies are a practical halfway house between arrant speculation and arid precision. On the one hand they provide empirical constraints that can guide speculation away from the embroidery of the genuinely idiosyncratic; on the other hand they can stimulate the production of ideas about how things are actually connected in the real world as a preliminary to a more rigorous empirical demonstration (p. 6).

I chose a single case study methodology because certain features of Connecticut's education reform initiative (e.g., its focus on teachers as a central reform strategy, the role of state agency personnel in agenda-setting, and choice of policy instruments to leverage change) make comparison with other state's education reform efforts difficult. Generally, the rationale for a single-case study is that it represents an *extreme or unique* case, or that it represents a *revelatory* case—that is, the investigator has the opportunity to observe and analyze a phenomenon previously inaccessible (Yin, 1994). I argue that both conditions are applicable here.

First, the CSDE is unique in having focused its major state education reform agenda around teachers who are viewed as central to improving both educational quality and equity and by concurrently raising teacher salaries and standards.⁷ Fuhrman (1994) in her study of education reform in 19 states notes that, "Connecticut, having pioneered development of performance-based tasks, relies on assessment and on attracting high quality teachers" (p. 1). McDonnell (1994) cites Connecticut and California as two states which rely heavily on assessment as instruments of persuasion. Unlike Connecticut,

⁷ Art Wise, current President of the National Council on Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and former consultant to an important Commission that laid the groundwork for the EEA of 1986, who was interviewed as part of this case study, commented recently, "It has never been repeated again....For the most part, you have three domains in which this is argued—the budget debate, the teacher salary debate, and the quality debate. In Connecticut, the surplus got mixed up with teacher compensation and teacher quality. In general, this does not happen. It tends to be three separate discussions."

however, California has focused almost exclusively on developing subject area frameworks and student assessments. Limited state-level attention has been given to the role of teachers in this reform or to building teacher capacity to implement these reforms (Spillane and Zeuli, 1997).

Second, the prominent role of state agency bureaucrats in formulating Connecticut's education reform agenda and developing policy instruments combining mandates and inducements is highly unusual. This is best illustrated by comparing Connecticut's approach to those of Kentucky and Vermont, two states often cited for their innovative, far-reaching state-level reform efforts. In Kentucky, for example, Kentucky Department of Education staff were almost completely uninvolved in the design of the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA). Instead, that legislation was crafted by three legislative task forces. In fact, the state education agency was viewed by legislators as part of the problem that needed to be solved through reform (Lusi, 1997). Kentucky's highly regulatory model of school reform, which imposes tangible consequences for compliance (monetary rewards) and non-compliance (sanctions on schools and possible dismissals of school staff), reflects a long tradition of strong state direction over curriculum and school policy. That tradition is not present in Connecticut. McDonnell (1994) observes that, "even if policymakers in Connecticut wanted to strengthen the impact of their assessment system, they would be limited by a political culture that places a great value on minimal state intervention and strong control over education by local jurisdictions" (p. 408). Thus, Connecticut's political culture that

places high value on local control and home rule serves as a strong inhibitor of a regulatory approach to education reform.

At the other end of the continuum, Vermont, a state frequently cited as having a comprehensive and complex reform strategy, relies on a state student portfolio assessment system that is voluntary (districts may opt out of the process) and that is not based in legislation. Prior to the implementation of this state assessment system, the Vermont Department of Education had little state presence in school reforms. "There was no state testing program of any kind. The state's former Basic Competency Program serves as an example of the nondirective nature of state policy. Although all students were required to master basic competencies prior to graduation, mastery was defined and tested at the local level" (Lusi, 1997, p. 155). Lusi further notes that the reform agenda was largely the work of a single policy entrepreneur, former Vermont Commissioner of Education Richard Mills who was specifically hired by the Vermont Board of Education to turn Vermont's system around. Whether or not such a reform agenda can be sustained over time with a minimal state education agency infrastructure and the voluntary nature of the assessment and accountability mechanisms is certainly questionable.

Because this case study focuses on the state policy-making framework rather than on long-term impact or effectiveness of the state-based reform initiatives on student achievement, it is difficult to draw conclusions about other states' reform approaches, other than to say that state reform efforts vary significantly in the levels of state leadership, state agency involvement, the choice of policy instruments, the capacity of state education agencies to manage complex reform, and the longevity of initiatives. Connecticut's

approach appears to be very unique compared to those of other states; and, as a consequence, it merits study in its own right.

Another reason which supports the use of a single case study methodology is that this investigator/researcher has particularly detailed knowledge of the case study as well as access to key educational policy makers in Connecticut because of her decade-long experience and role in the state education agency being studied. As a participant observer, my “insider’s viewpoint” has provided an opportunity to determine meanings and interactions not readily illuminated through documents, artifacts, questionnaires, and interviews. As Jorgensen (1989) notes, participant observation is a strategy for gaining access to otherwise inaccessible dimensions of human life and experience. Robert Wood (1988) elaborates that, “[discovery] is really the sine qua non of the participant-observer mode of inquiry. It provides data otherwise not available” (p. 5).

Multiple sources of evidence were collected as part of this case study (for a more detailed explanation, see Appendix A). These include:

written documentation: These sources included state-level policy reports, archival records, programmatic materials, past surveys and program evaluation reports, and other written materials related to Connecticut’s education reform initiatives and teacher standards initiatives over the past two decades; and

open-ended interviews: Twenty-eight individuals were interviewed, including past and present Commissioners of Education, State Board of Education members, legislators, union representatives, teachers, administrators, state education agency managers and consultants, national experts in teacher policies, as well as representatives of the business community and media. Individuals were selected because of their position or role in the state education agency (past and present), the political system, or reputation for being knowledgeable about or influential towards Connecticut’s education reform agenda over the past decade. In addition, interviews were conducted with individuals directly involved with Connecticut’s teacher standards initiatives, including agency middle managers and consultants, school district personnel who participated in project development, and specific

individuals who were influential in the development of teacher policy through their participation on various task forces or commissions.

Interviews were conducted on-site between July 1997 and June 1998, with the exception of one interview which was conducted by telephone. Interviews were open-ended, using several generic protocols, adjusted to the individual's particular position and role. Interviews were generally one hour long, and were audio-taped unless the conditions or site of the interview made audio-taping impossible. All audio-tapes were transcribed, as were handwritten notes. Data analysis included coding of interview data, sorting of data into coded categories, and analysis of data across categories as well as between individuals. Memos to myself were written to reflect emerging hypotheses as they appeared. In the spring of 1998, papers providing a preliminary analysis of the research were presented at two conferences (the American Educational Research Association and New England Political Science Association), and comments from reviewers and participants provided invaluable feedback which helped clarify main hypotheses and arguments.

The Context, Theoretical Framework, and Organization of the Case Study

As noted earlier, the fragmentation of the American political system and the decentralized organization of American education is often cited as the reason why education policy lacks coherence in the United States and why most education reforms end up in the "curious situation of altering everything by changing nothing..." (Mitchell, 1996, p. 175). The goal of Chapters Two and Three is to provide a context and

theoretical framework for interpreting the implications of the Connecticut case study of bureaucratically-driven, state-level education reform and the role that bureaucratic entrepreneurship has played in sustaining Connecticut's reform agenda and policy innovation over more than a decade.

Chapter Two traces the evolution of the growth in influence of state-level government over education policy. This is best illustrated in its historical context by tracing the shifting relationships between the federal, state and local levels of government in public education. The chapter examines the evolution of the state role in public schooling from the beginnings of a system of public schooling in the early nineteenth century up to World War II; the growth in the federal role in education which was manifested in the explosive growth in social programs and intergovernmental grants in the 1960s and 1970s; the subsequent shift of program, policy and funding for education to the state and local levels as a result of the conservative and devolutionary domestic policies of the Reagan and Bush administrations; and the "tidal wave" of state-level education reform initiatives of the 1980s.

Chapter Three describes the new education reform strategies that subsequently emerged in the aftermath of the 1980s reforms as a result of both politicians' and policy makers' impatience for results as well as an economic recession in the early 1990s which produced in some states a backlash against a strong state role in education policy. It is within this context that the unique characteristics of educational institutions are discussed, including the reasons for the remarkable resiliency of schools and educational practitioners to maintain current practice and resist changes. These characteristics help explain why

highly rational or production models of education policy reform—such as the systemic reform movement—are largely unsuccessful. An alternative approach to policy-making, which is grounded in the notion that politics and policy-making is a process of persuasion and learning, will be described. This policy-making model promotes the development of alternatives to traditional policy instruments (such as mandates) which emphasize persuasion and the manipulation of incentives and the development of alternative roles for bureaucrats. The last part of the chapter will present the concept of bureaucratic entrepreneurship as an extension of the literature on bureaucratic policy-making—that is, the notion that there is a role for administrative actors not just to promote and implement policy, but to be innovators who create new policies. The nature of bureaucratic entrepreneurship as well as the conditions under which it emerges and flourishes will be discussed. This chapter also lays the theoretical groundwork for understanding how state governments can serve as policy laboratories experimenting with new ideas.

Chapters Four and Five present the case study of education reform in Connecticut. Chapter Four examines bureaucratically-driven education reform in the context of two comprehensive, state-level education reform attempts: (1) the first being a successful, bureaucratically-driven initiative culminating in the passage of the Education Enhancement Act of 1986; and (2) the second a largely unsuccessful “systemic” reform initiative launched by the business community in the early 1990s through the Commission on Educational Excellence in Connecticut (CEEC). These two reform attempts are illustrative of the two competing models of policy-making described in Chapter Four. The policy process leading to the enactment of the EEA involved the active leadership, ideas

and involvement of state agency personnel over a long period of time. Furthermore, the release of the national report in 1983, *A Nation at Risk*, was instrumental in shifting public perception about the need for education reform and producing a political environment conducive to the enactment of a comprehensive reform agenda. In contrast, in the early 1990s, the CEEC became an arena for self-serving, competing interests mostly outside of the education community to press their own particular political agendas, but that leadership and vision was lacking to persuade the legislators or the public, as a whole, that there was a need for “results-driven” reform of Connecticut’s education system. The differences between these two reform attempts are startling and instructive from the perspective of leadership, the role of ideas in formulating public policy, and bureaucratic activism or “entrepreneurship.”

Chapter Five examines more closely bureaucratic activism or “entrepreneurship” in relation to Connecticut’s teacher standards initiatives, one of the most important and influential components of Connecticut’s education reform agenda emerging from the EEA. Leadership from various levels within the agency combined with capacity-building within the agency and an entrepreneurial culture allowed for the sustained development of the most innovative teacher performance assessments in the country, even in the face of shifting fiscal, environment and political conditions. This chapter also illustrates how Connecticut’s teacher standards initiatives serve as policy instruments that combine the state’s coercive power through its authority to license teachers with *incentives* (providing money to school districts to support the induction of new teachers as well as making available statewide quality professional development), *capacity building* (training large

numbers of beginning and experienced educators to understand principles of effective teaching practice as reflected in state teacher standards and assessments), and *system-changing* mechanisms (placing teacher licensing decisions in the hands of practitioners trained by the state to assess beginning teachers, aligning state standards for approval of teacher preparation institutions with licensing standards for beginning teachers, and issuing state guidelines for local district evaluation of veteran teachers that reflect state standards for teachers).

Finally, Chapter Six will summarize briefly the findings of this research and discuss its implications for educational policy makers as well as policy analysts in general. Furthermore, areas of potential further research will be proposed.

CHAPTER 2

TRACING THE EVOLUTION OF THE GROWTH IN STATE INFLUENCE OVER LOCAL EDUCATION POLICY

This case study of bureaucratically-driven, state-level education reform takes place within the two decade period (the 1980s and 1990s) in which states assumed an unprecedented role in directing policy and funding for K-12 education reform. The growth in state activism in educational policy which began in the mid-1980s was attributable to the expansion of the institutional capacity of state governments over the preceding two decades, largely the result of the Great Society influx of federal monies for education that supported growth in state education department staffing and technical capacity. In addition, the 1980s reform movement was also the unanticipated outgrowth of the Reagan administration's ideological commitment to the devolution of educational policy and the transfer of program and funding responsibility from the federal to state and local levels (Marshall, Mitchell and Wirt, 1989; Mazzoni, 1995; Ravitch, 1984).

The significance of the growth in the state role in public education since the mid-1960s can be best illustrated in its historical context as one traces the shifting relationships between the federal, state, and local levels of government in public education. This examination will also set a context for evaluating the significance of this case study of bureaucratically-driven state-level education reform in Connecticut, a state with a history and political culture valuing home rule and local control over education.

Specifically, this chapter will examine:

- 1) the evolution of the state role in public schooling from the beginnings of a system of public schooling in the early nineteenth century up to World War II, during which time traditions of democratic localism and individualism slowly gave way to increased state centralization and control of schooling, but with little diminishment of local control;
- 2) the growth of the federal role in education beginning in the 1930s, as a result of the increase in the federal government's powers to raise revenue and judicial activism, and the subsequent explosive growth in social programs and intergovernmental grants launched by Johnson's Great Society in the 1960s;
- 3) the subsequent shift of program, policy and funding responsibility for education from the federal to state and local levels as a consequence of the conservative and devolutionary domestic policies of the Reagan and Bush administrations as well as court cases challenging state school financing systems; and
- 4) the "tidal wave" of state-level education reform initiatives of the 1980s, in which local control as a value and operational fact declined and states became increasingly activist in their pursuit of equity, quality and efficiency in education (Wirt and Kirst, 1997).

The Decline of Democratic Localism and the Beginnings of the State Role in Public Schooling

Katznelson and Weir (1985) point out that, "The commitment to educate all children in primary schools paid for by the government was the most distinctive American public policy of the early nineteenth century" (p. 10). Early America was characterized by an absence of a sense of state,¹ which is what makes the commitment to government-financed public education all the more unique. For much of the early nineteenth century, the American "state" was diffuse and decentralized with a relatively undeveloped

¹ In this section, depending upon the context, the term "state" is used both as a broad concept of power or authority represented by a body of people politically organized under one government as well as the more specific use of the term state as a territorial or political unit in a federal system of government.

administrative apparatus, and the federal system was concerned mainly with securing its own existence at home and in the international arena.² Much of the responsibility to incorporate citizens into the social and political order as well as to maintain order fell to local governments. Furthermore, with the U.S. Constitution silent about education, the founding of public school systems was undertaken at the local level within the framework of state laws.

Through the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, a tradition of democratic localism, individualism, and volunteerism prevented the creation of more centralized, differentiated political institutions at the state level, including strong legal foundations and administrative structures for public education. The absence of a state church and inherited national culture left communities to create local institutions according to their own political needs. As Timar (1997) notes, “As such, schools were the products of individual teachers, churches, philanthropic societies, towns and districts with connection to a ‘state interest’” (p. 237). Thus, the development of elementary schools was more the result of local custom rather than state policy. This model of public schooling, which has been termed “paternalistic volunteerism,” was characterized as a class system, with free schooling advocated primarily for the very poor. Efforts to formally organize schools or staff them with trained professionals was resisted (Katz, 1987).

² The period of 1789 to 1860 has been characterized as operating under a system of “dual federalism,” in which the national government exercised its clearly enumerated constitutional powers. The two centers of government (state and national) were considered “sovereign” within their respective spheres of authority and thus “equal,” thereby creating a relationship of tension rather than collaboration between them (Walker, 1980).

The emergence of a true public educational system did not occur until the latter part of the 19th century, coincident with the emergence of democratic politics, industrialization, urbanization, and the formation of a working class. It was also a product of the expansion of administrative capacities in America around the turn of the century. As Skrowronek (1982) notes, "The construction of a central bureaucratic apparatus was championed as the best way to maintain order during this period of upheaval of economic, social and international affairs" (p. 4). Furthermore, the creation of public schools was seen as one means of protecting the political and economic order during the early periods of capitalist industrialization.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, voluntary associations began turning to public institutions for assistance in addressing the growing misery of the cities, first by seeking grants, and later by ceding formal and permanent responsibility to governmental institutions. The creation of new public institutions and state administrative bodies with full-time, expert staff reflected the new faith in the power of formal institutions to alleviate social and individual distress.

Nineteenth century education reformers also perceived public education as the key agency for the solution of virtually every social problem as well as the cornerstone of democracy. "In both their strengths and their limits, school systems, with their emphasis on equal access and unequal rewards, their fictive meritocracy, and their bureaucratic organization of experience, became miniature versions of America's social and political order" (Katz, 1987, p. 23). The public school system was established and expanded through the process of gaining authority over its core activities (teaching, curriculum, and

staffing) and fending off rival institutions that attempted to usurp its authority, such as families, churches, and private business. Loveless (1998) comments that, "Universality was achieved through intense competition with the family, the church and the workplace, and successive reform movements decisively reinforced the denouement of the contest: Schools are creatures of the state"³ (p.3).

It was during this period that educational reformers were able to transform the organization, scope, and role of public education into what one would consider a true educational system—that is, carefully articulated, age-graded, hierarchically structured, primarily free and often compulsory, administered by full-time experts and taught progressively by specially trained staff (Katz, 1987). An "incipient bureaucracy" model for formal education, which was characterized by a strong regulatory role for the state in terms of social welfare and morality, eventually won over competing models for education such as "democratic localism," which stressed variety, local adaptability, and a symbiotic relationship between school and community. Katz (1987) notes that, "in the last analysis, the rejection of democratic localism rested only partly on inefficiency and violation of parental prerogative. It stemmed equally from a visceral fear of the cultural divisiveness inherent in the increasing religious and ethnic variety of American life. Cultural

³ It is worth noting here that the competition between schools and rival institutions—such as the family, the church and workplace—continues into the twentieth century. Loveless (1998) sees this competition evident in the educational reform themes stressing choice, equity, excellence and accountability. "School choice reinvigorates the public schools as former institutional rivals. Families are put in the driver's seat in determining the education their children receive. In the case of voucher programs, if religious schools are able to surmount constitutional challenges to their participation, the long-dormant influence of churches in public school affairs will be reawakened. And the dominant metaphor of the school-choice movement—portraying educators as producers and parents and schools as their customers—describes the core relationships of schooling in terms that are familiar to private enterprise" (Loveless, 1998, p. 4).

homogenization played counterpoint to administrative rationality. Bureaucracy was intended to standardize far more than the conduct of public life”⁴ (p. 47).

Educators had begun taking the lead in extending the domain and influence of public education even prior to the Civil War. Katznelson and Weir (1985) refer to these educators as “state-builders.” Training for citizenship in a democracy provided a rationale for the early assumption of state responsibility for education, and considerations of equality dictated that the curriculum be directed towards that end. Katz (1987) points out that these leading figures of the educational revival did not behave like traditional bureaucrats, nor did they adopt the bureaucratic ideal of personality. “Neither was their ideal teacher or administrator to be a colorless public servant efficiently and quietly executing the public will. Quite the contrary; the model for the educational administrator came from neither business nor the military, but from evangelical religion” (p. 49).

By the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century, state educational leaders had succeeded in establishing the legal foundations for school systems, but remained relatively unsuccessful in building an administrative structure over that foundation. By 1870, all but one state (Delaware) had established an office of education within its central bureaucracy. State laws were passed to make sure that curricular content and instructional decisions were fixed securely within the public school system’s institutional domain and not subject to the discretion of parent or church (Loveless, 1998). Nonetheless, Timar (1997) notes that the role of state education bureaucracies in that

⁴ Katz (1987) also notes that one of the greatest ironies of American education is that ideology of democratic localism persists today—even within urban school systems—even though the system is highly bureaucratic and heavily influenced by the state and federal governments.

period was tenuous and their capacity and influence to impact local education policy highly contingent.⁵ Even with legal frameworks in place, the reach of state authority depended largely on local compliance. State superintendents of education—such as Horace Mann in Massachusetts, who presided over the Board of Education at its founding in 1837 and subsequent abolition by democratic localists in 1840, and Henry Barnard, who served as Connecticut Commissioner of Education from 1849 to 1855, faced political opposition, meager resources and the limited nature of their duties. Nonetheless, these state officials made an impact on state educational systems. State departments of education served as a platform for standardizing and professionalizing educational practices (Katz, 1987). Even more importantly, these institutions established in law that “education was a matter for public, not private, interest” (Timar, 1997, p. 240).

After the Civil War, an array of social groups sought to reshape the public school system beyond the tasks of citizenship to their own cultural and economic needs. Concurrently, school officials used curricular innovations to extend the reach of state policy to new groups and to prevent competing institutions from dominating educational content and purposes (Katznelson and Weir, 1985). The Progressive era, beginning roughly in the 1890s and entering the mainstream of the organized education profession with the publication of the *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* in 1918 (Ravitch, 1983), heralded in a period of consolidated state administrative authority and attempts to integrate state administrative authority with professional interests. State departments of

⁵ Timar (1997) also points out that the role and authority of state education bureaucracies remains tenuous even today.

education used interlocking networks of school district administrators and professors of education working with state affiliates of the National Education Association to create a legislative and administrative agenda for education. Concurrently, attempts were made to isolate state administration from "politics" by promoting the notion that chief state school officers should be appointed by state boards of education and that state residence requirements for chief state school officers should be eliminated so that there would be more flexibility in selecting candidates from a national pool. Education departments also became advocates for school finance reform (Timar, 1997).

Thus, between the First and Second World Wars, state bureaucracies were agents of professional hierarchies composed of various interests. The authority, political strength, and size of the bureaucracy varied from state-to-state; however, their shared characteristic was that they provided an institutional forum to further the agendas of professional interests. Thus, policy agendas covering school consolidation, teacher tenure, student testing and tracking emanated from educational progressives, not from the public. Nonetheless, state education departments did not challenge the sanctity of local control. Timar (1997) notes that the price of consensus was an implied agreement that the state would not threaten the authority of school administrators and that, in turn, school administrators would support the state.

The Growing Federal Presence in Public Education and its Role in Increasing the Administrative and Technical Capacity of State Education Agencies

The role and influence of the federal government in public education in the latter part of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century was minimal. Although proposals to provide federal aid to education had been raised periodically in Congress as early as the 1870s, they had consistently failed to pass, no matter how compelling the demonstration of educational calamity. Only when some crisis riveted attention on the schools did federal aid surface as a national issue—for example, after World War I when the army discovered many of its draftees were illiterate, and during the Great Depression when plummeting revenues closed schools, fired teachers and eliminated programs (Ravitch, 1983).

Nonetheless, the relationship between the federal government and states began to alter at the turn of the century as the taxing powers of the national government were increased, and these developments, in turn, increased the availability of federal aid to states to support public education. The Sixteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which gave Congress in 1913 the power to collect income taxes without reapportioning the revenue to the states, laid the groundwork for what was in the future to become the extraordinary and unpredicted power of the federal government to buy national policy-oriented outcomes.⁶ It was also in this period that an increasing number of states adopted

⁶ This has been described in its functional sense as “fiscal federalism,” the cornerstone of intergovernmental relations in which the receipt of grant funds is linked to the assignment of government functions and regulations to different levels of government (Dye, 1990; Walker, 1995). This paper occasionally refers to various functional definitions of federalism. “Federalism” by definition is an approach to governance that seeks to combine unity and diversity (Kincaid, 1995), but evokes different perceptions and connotations over time through a proliferation of models, metaphors and labels. “Dual

income taxes, thereby increasing the income-generating power and overall influence of state government. During the first three decades of the century, intergovernmental fiscal transfers increased substantially, with school districts and counties becoming the primary recipients of state aid. Federal cash aid to states also increased, through such legislation as the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, which provided funding for vocational education. By 1930, there were fifteen federal categorical grants adding up to \$100 million, which nonetheless represented a very small percentage of overall state and local expenditures (Walker, 1980; Walker, 1995).

The period of the Great Depression and the launching of the New Deal resulted in an unheralded increase in federal authority in such domains as the economy.⁷ The emergency programs enacted during 1933 expanded the national government's scope of authority, and the courts, by upholding the passage of several New Deal Programs, such as the National Labor Relations Act and Social Security Act of 1935, further sanctioned an enlargement of Federal power by declaring that the regulatory power of the national government outweighed that of the states (Walker, 1980; Walker, 1995).

A new judicial activism also was present as early as 1937, when the Court began to enunciate a "preferred-freedoms" principal, involving the federal constitutional protection of those rights implicit in the concept of "ordered liberty." A gradual stream of civil rights

federalism" was coined as a term by John Taylor Walker in 1820 to imply separate, equal spheres of power, and was used to describe the U.S. national government of enumerated powers from approximately 1789 to 1860. Operational versions of dual federalism have evolved based on differing views of the proper functional and concomitant behavioral relations between state and federal spheres of government.

⁷The relationship between the state and federal governments during the period of 1930 to 1960 is frequently referred to as "cooperative federalism," in which there was significant growth in Federal grants, services-in-aid and other forms of interlevel assistance that emerged out of the New Deal (Walker, 1995).

cases, which involved a case-by-case incorporation of various First Amendment guarantees within the “due process” and “equal protection” clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment, began to come before the Court in the postwar period. State-required segregation in interstate transportation was found unconstitutional in 1946; the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 invalidated the “separate but equal” doctrine as it applied to education. This case, which laid the groundwork for the Civil Rights Act of 1964, was to have an unprecedented impact on enlarging the federal government’s regulatory role in public education over the next three decades.

The 1930s was also a period of unprecedented growth in government outlays. Growth was dominant at the federal level, but there was also a steady growth in state expenditures. By 1960, seventeen states had enacted state income taxes, and thirty-five had passed sales tax measures. Although property taxes still dominated localities’ revenue sources, Walker (1990) notes that, “local governmental finances were helped and indirectly the pressures on the property tax were somewhat lightened by this rising tide of state aid” (p. 77). State aid to local government rose, with school districts and counties as the primary recipients.

We see, then, that two factors were instrumental in setting the stage for a growing role for the federal government in education: (1) the Sixteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which expanded the fiscal power of federal government and set the stage for the federal government’s reliance on the conditional grant or grants-in-aid as a means to achieve certain programmatic purposes; and (2) the Fourteenth Amendment, which

provided the basis for judicial activism and subsequent federal intervention in local education practices.

In the post-war period, growth in federal funding of education was also caused by pressures for school reform. By the 1950s, educational outsiders began questioning the effectiveness of the public education system. As Timar (1997) notes, “fissures appeared in the wall of professionalism that had been erected by the administrative progressives” (p. 244). The launching of Sputnik served as the crisis to precipitate support for an increased federal role in education reform. Leading university scientists and foundation directors (including those from the National Science Foundation) raised concerns that the quality of mathematics and science education was inadequate to meet the nation’s goal of defeating Communism. They also criticized the public schools for their anti-intellectualism. The Congress subsequently passed Title III of the National Defense Education Act in 1958, which provided fellowships, grants, and loans to encourage the study of science, mathematics and foreign languages and funded much needed school construction and equipment. Ravitch (1983) comments that, “The active federal aid lobby, defeated so many times in the past, was happy to latch on to national security as a vehicle to establish the legitimacy of the federal role in supporting education” (p. 229). During this period, state departments of education played rather marginal roles in curriculum reforms, as most of these reforms were marketed to schools through private non-governmental channels such as the Educational Development Corporation of Newton, Massachusetts. However, NDEA Title III funds went directly to state departments of education (SDEs), thereby strengthening SDE capacities for curriculum supervision and

leadership and providing funds to support the administrative costs of local implementation (Timar, 1997). In addition to increasing the administrative and technical capacity in state education agencies, federal monies shifted control of policy in state education agencies away from the elite professional interests that had been dominant during the first half of the twentieth century to an array of special interests in the second half of the century (Timar, 1997).

During the period 1950 to 1965, Congress was unsuccessful in garnering enough political support to legislate general federal aid to education. Instead, impact aid, a form of categorical assistance to “federally impacted areas,”⁸ was sought as a substitute or covert version of federal aid, as it was generally exempt from the political controversies that blocked passage of general federal aid to education.

By 1965, however, the picture changed dramatically, and the stage was set for the federal government to use its fiscal power to enact a national agenda. President Johnson’s launching of the Great Society had at its core the overriding national purpose of promoting the integrative, educational, economic and redistributive goals of one vast commonwealth. Governor Nelson Rockefeller coined the phrase, “Creative Federalism,”⁹

⁸ “Federally impacted areas” implied school districts with a disproportionate share of children of federal workers, who used local schools without paying local taxes. Originally enacted in 1940 to help districts whose schools were temporarily overcrowded by children of federal defense workers, this categorical assistance was expanded in the 1950s to cover districts in the South, where many defense installations were located. Over the years, Congress redefined eligibility for impact aid to include ever larger numbers of districts across the nation (Ravitch, 1983).

⁹ “Creative federalism” has been used as a functional descriptor of Johnson’s Great Society because of “its innovative plunges into new program areas, its use of new grant forms, and its urban focus combined to transform the earlier, largely two-tier, inexpensive, rurally oriented, and incrementally inspired intergovernmental complex into something quite complicated, quite complex, and quite controversial” (Walker, 1995, p. 25).

to describe Johnson's belief that the national government had the capacity to solve basic economic and societal problems (Walker, 1995). As noted earlier, the Fourteenth (equal protection clause) and Sixteen (federal taxing power) amendments to the U.S.

Constitution provided the carrot and stick to enlarge the scope of federal power. The former became the basis for a new regulatory era; the second a means to use grants-in-aid as prime mechanisms to promote partnerships to achieve national as well as state and local goals. Both factors were instrumental in increasing the capacities and influence of state education agencies on local educational practices.

The federal presence in educational institutions increased dramatically in the 1960s as the federal government launched a new educational reform agenda whose goal was massive institutional change (Timar, 1997). During this period, major federal education legislation was passed, such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. The civil rights agenda initiated by the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision resulted in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and ESEA, both of which proved to be powerful tools for school desegregation as well as for growth in the federal influence on public education at the local level (Peterson, Rabe and Wong, 1986).

State influence over local education was substantially increased as a result of state administration of federal categorical grants. Walker (1980) notes that, "[at] the heart of the Johnson approach was a near monolithic reliance on the conditional grant device to achieve his Great Society goals, hence his Creative Federalism formulation" (p. 103).

Grants-in-aid became a prime mechanism for promoting partnerships to achieve national as well as state and local goals. State and local governments came to be seen as administrative instruments of the national government (Dye, 1990). During this period, there was tremendous growth in the federal system of intergovernmental grants, with a quadrupling of grants-in aid between 1960 and 1980, from \$19.5 billion in 1960 to \$91.5 billion in 1980 (Peterson, Rabe and Wong, 1986). These grants-in-aid were the most dramatic example of the sharing of functions between different branches of government, as they were sums of money given by the federal government to lower levels of government in order to finance the performance of specified functions (Reagan, 1972).

States served as pivotal intermediaries by serving as prime recipients of federal grant funds and as channelers of federal aid to localities. Federal requirements for agencies to approve local projects for federal funds in such areas as education for disadvantaged, handicapped, bilingual, and migrant children, as well as funds for educational innovation increased the capacity of state education agencies to intercede in local school policy. Additionally, growth in state education department staffing and technical capacity was supported by the one percent of federal funds administration as well as Title V of ESEA earmarked for state administration, with special emphasis given to supporting state planning and evaluation functions (Wirt and Kirst, 1997; Fuhrman & Elmore, 1990).

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was particularly significant. It empowered federal officials to withdraw funds from any program violating anti-discrimination laws and regulations. As Ravitch (1984) notes, "With Title VI as the stick and federal funds as

the carrot, the federal government became a significant factor in setting rules for the nation's schools, colleges and universities. A school system whose budget relies on federal funds for about 10 percent of its revenues or a major university that received millions for research programs and fellowships was not in a strong position to oppose federal directives" (p. 268). In addition, the professional consensus that had guided educational policy-making in the first half of the century crumbled as groups coalesced around specific policy interests such as compensatory education, education of handicapped and learning disabled children, and bilingual education—all of which developed their own hosts of constituencies and legislative advocates (Timar, 1997). Ravitch (1983) comments that,

To an extraordinary degree, the consensus that had undergirded American education for most of its history seemed to be dissipating, and the emergence of rival claimants mirrored the growing uncertainty about the purpose of education... The lesson of the federal categorical programs (such as bilingual education, compensatory education, and special education), federal directives, and court orders, it appeared, was that each interest group had to look out for itself, to get as much federal protection and dollars as possible, regardless of the effect on the institution. Lost in the new order of things was any conception of the common interest, the idea that made common schooling possible (p. 316).

The purpose and structure of SDEs underwent significant change during this period, which mirrored contemporary policy and political changes. Instead of serving as an umbrella for the broad educational interests within the state, the interests and organizational structures of education departments splintered. SDEs began to be organized into units reflecting various policy areas, rather than disciplinary or subject matter areas. Between 1965 and 1970, budgets and total agency staff for SDEs more than

doubled. Sixty percent of this growth was attributable to the influx of federal monies to support state administration of federal programs. The relationship between state agencies and schools turned more adversarial, as the state agency became the enforcer for a proliferation of educational interests supported by changes in funding sources (Timar, 1997).

The Outgrowth of Reagan's "New Federalism": A New Role for the States

President Nixon attempted to reverse some of the trends of the Great Society's "creative federalism" by supporting greater decentralization within the federal government to field units, devolution in the form of revenue sharing and block grants, and the streamlining of service delivery (Walker, 1980). This reformist thrust, which was a response to some of the perceived administrative dysfunctions and implementation failures of the Great Society, was expanded under Reagan's "New Federalism". Rather than attempting to improve intergovernmental management and effectiveness (as some have described Nixon's "New Federalism"), the "New Federalism" of Ronald Reagan was an attempt to return functionally to a form of "dual federalism," in which there are separate spheres of power between the state and federal government. In fact, the Reagan administration actively sought to reduce the power, influence and morale of the national bureaucracy. Conlan (1988) comments that, "Reagan...consistently favored national over subnational authority only in those areas in which federal policies were more deferential to private markets or could be used to advance the conservative political agenda" (p. 4).

The slowing in growth of federal revenues and massive federal deficits altered the relationship between federal, state and local governments, leading states to assume more policy responsibility in such areas as education. Between 1980 and 1986, there was a dramatic reversal in the trend for growth in intergovernmental grants. Grant expenditures fell from 3.4 percent of GNP to 2.7 percent—more than half-way back to the level of spending in 1965 when the Great Society had just begun (Peterson, Rabe, and Wong, 1986).

The Reagan administration's thrust of "less government and spending" was articulated in its policy goals for education. Those goals included de-emphasizing the position of education on the federal agenda, diminishing the federal budget in education, dismantling the U.S. Department of Education, deregulating education programs, and decentralizing programs and service to states and localities (Verstegen, 1990). Some of Reagan's policy goals such as the decentralization of professionally administered redistributive programs such as compensatory education and special education, however, were not realized, due to congressional resistance and the advocacy of state and local officials (Peterson, Rabe, and Wong, 1986).

Ironically, the release of U.S. Secretary of Education Terence Bell's report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, made education again a national issue. The report, which linked the decline in the national economy with the decline in education, advocated a limited role for the federal government: "We believe the assistance of the Federal Government should be provided with a minimum of administrative burden and assistance" (National Commission on Excellence in Education,

p. 33). It did, however, assign to the federal government the primary responsibility to identify the national interest in education. The report, as a consequence, was enormously influential in raising education in prominence as a policy issue. Strong grassroots support for education swelled and the phenomenon of the “education governor” appeared. There were increases in state education legislation and financial support. Congressional support for education also grew, as evidenced by the passage of the Hawkins-Stafford Act, which re-categorized the Reagan block grant into six broad areas, increased appropriations for education, and amended the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Nonetheless, the Reagan administration was successful in diminishing the overall size, cost and direction of the federal role in American education. This was due primarily to a slowing in the growth of federal revenues accompanied by a massive federal deficit and steady trade imbalance, increased defense spending, and rising demographic demands upon Social Security and Medicaid. National budgetary constraints foreclosed new discretionary spending and prevented Congress from maintaining spending levels for education (Verstegen, 1990).

In addition to re-directing national priorities and decentralizing domestic programs through budgetary policy, Reagan’s “New Federalism” agenda encouraged states to undertake greater policy responsibilities through its conservative and devolutionary domestic and economic policies, which restrained and cut federal domestic spending.¹⁰

¹⁰ Nathan (1993) notes that the role of state governments in federally organized nations tends to be cyclical and heavily influenced by political ideology. Specifically, in conservative periods, state governments tend to be more activist; in more liberal periods when the federal government becomes more activist, they are subdued. This observation appears fitting in light of the lesser state policy role during the years of Johnson’s Great Society and the greater state policy role in the Reagan years.

Heavier reliance on state government also continued through the Bush administration. The rising role of the states in the 1980s and 1990s was also attributable to modernization in state government, which increased the capacity of the states to take on new and expanded functions as well as the rapid recovery of the U.S. economy following the recession at the beginning of President Reagan's first term (Nathan, 1993). This period saw a burst of state and local policy innovation and a decline in the dependence of states and localities on federal assistance. State governmental activism emerged in such areas as education reform, economic development, and welfare dependence. A "tidal wave" of education reform initiatives from state government resulted in new policy initiatives, legislation, and funding (Conlan, 1988). This wave of state activism has continued to give shape to the "new federalism" of the 1990s.

Another dimension contributing to the growth in the influence of states in education policy since the 1960s relates to school finance reform (Mazzoni, 1995; Marshall, Mitchell and Wirt, 1989; Wirt and Kirst, 1997). The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) laid the precedent for legal arguments for more equitable school funding structures. Legal activists of the late 1960s argued that a school finance system that linked local school expenditures to local property tax wealth violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. This argument first met success in the landmark case, *Serrano v. Priest* (1971), which was the first case to question the constitutional inequalities in school district spending. In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that education was a fundamental interest and that the California funding scheme discriminated against the poor. This decision relied

on the standard of “fiscal neutrality,” that is, “the quality of a child’s education cannot be a function of the wealth of the local school district, only the wealth of the state as a whole” (*Financing Connecticut’s Schools*, 1975, p. 2). The idea that education is a fundamental interest under the federal constitution was dealt a severe blow in *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* (1973). In this case, the Supreme Court reversed the decision of the federal district court which had found the Texas school finance system unconstitutional under the federal equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The Supreme Court further declared that education was not a fundamental interest under the federal constitution. Shortly thereafter, the New Jersey state supreme court in *Robinson v. Cahill* (1973) affirmed that the education provisions of the state constitution, rather than the equal protection requirements, could be used to test whether funding of schools was discriminatory. Crucial to this argument was the position that education is a state, not local function. Long (1983) comments that,

As a matter of law, education in nearly every state is a function of the state, not local government. In this regard education is unlike sewer, police, or fire departments. In virtually every state, school districts are considered legal agencies of the state, whose function is to assist the state in carrying out its constitutional obligation to provide a free public education to all children (p. 482).

Because education is a state function, school funds, whether raised locally or statewide, are state funds. Since school districts derive their authority from the state, they remain subordinate to the state. Wise (1968) notes that, “They are simply administrative units created by the state for the convenience in the administration of the schools of the state” (p. 101).

The *Rodriguez* and *Serrano* decisions have spawned over two decades of court cases challenging state school financing systems, and numerous states (including Connecticut) have been forced by the courts to restructure state education financing to decrease reliance on local property taxes and seek other sources of revenue, such as state income taxes, as a means of equalizing educational spending across districts. School finance reform efforts were, in part, responsible for states becoming the leading sources of education revenues by 1978-79 (Fuhrman & Elmore, 1990). The increasing share of state funding of public education has not only increased state capacity to provide services to local districts (Wirt and Kirst, 1997), but has also increased states' abilities to influence local education policies and practices (an important concept to be examined at length in the Connecticut case study). By the late 1980s, education represented the largest category of state and local government expenditures (35 percent). State governments paid, on average, 50 percent of total costs of public education, compared to 40 percent fifteen years previously. States were now spending on average a quarter of their budgets on elementary and secondary education. In contrast, the federal government contributed less than 15 percent of national expenditures to education, and only a little more than 6 percent of school operating budgets. It is important, however, not to underestimate the impact of federal aid, despite the fact that the federal government plays a relatively minor role in educational funding and direct federal governance of education. Federal aid can, in fact, be considered fungible, that is, federal money for other governmental functions may free state and local money to support education (Dye, 1990).

The growing cost of public education and increased state share of costs changed the incentive structure for state policy makers. (Dye, 1990; Cohen and Spillane, 1993; McDonnell and Fuhrman, 1985). McDonnell and Fuhrman note that, “The size of this expenditure in a period of fiscal retrenchment, combined with public attention in the policy arena, created a substantial incentive for policymakers to become concerned about whether they were receiving their money’s worth” (p. 56).

The Tidal Wave of State-based Education Reform in the 1980s

The next section of this chapter will explore the causes and effects of states’ assertive leadership roles in education reform initiatives during the 1980s, and in turn, provide a context for understanding this case study of bureaucratically-driven, state-level education reform in Connecticut, a state with a history and political culture valuing home rule and local control over education.

The catalyst frequently cited for the “1980s policy eruption” of state-based education reform was the report of the National Commission on Excellence, *A Nation at Risk*, one of several reports criticizing the state of U.S. schools and recommending a variety of reforms to promote educational excellence. *A Nation at Risk* evoked the image of a country in great peril, thereby serving as a political manifesto for conservative interests critical of the public education system. By the fall of 1983, public education had moved to center stage in the nation’s electronic and print media, and state-level task forces, commissions, and committees had sprung up around the country. Elite and popular pressures mounted on state policy makers to “do something” about education (Mazzoni,

1995; McDonnell and Fuhrman, 1985). The growth in state activism in educational policy in the 1980s nonetheless was attributable to a number of other factors, including growth in the institutional capacity of state governments during the preceding two decades, which was largely the result of the Great Society influx of federal monies that increased the power and expertise of state departments of education. In addition, the 1980s reform movement was also an unanticipated outgrowth of the Reagan administration's ideological commitment to devolution of educational policy and the transfer of program and funding responsibility from the federal to state and local levels (Marshall, Mitchell and Wirt, 1989; Mazzoni, 1995; Ravitch, 1984). Wirt and Kirst (1997) observe that local control as a value and operational fact declined during that period, as states became increasingly activist in their pursuit of equity, quality and efficiency in education.

In the period just prior to the mid-1980s surge of state activism in education reform, the states were reeling from the impact of federal domestic spending cutbacks. State budgets were seriously constrained by fiscal austerity measures and various tax limitations. The education client and professional groups that traditionally came together to lobby in favor of increased funding for education were unable to present a sufficiently united front to stem decreases in federal education spending from \$8.2 billion to \$6.7 billion from 1979 to 1982 (McDonnell and Fuhrman, 1985).

By the mid-1980s, however, the picture had altered dramatically, as the states were now providing new energy, direction and funding for education reform. The question arises as to what changes occurred between the late 1970s and mid-1980s that led to the 1980s wave of state-based education reform and created conditions conducive to a rapid

diffusion of ideas and reform initiatives among education policy makers across the country.

In their study of four post-World War II instances of national reform efforts (including the National Defense Education Act of 1958, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, and the 1980s educational excellence movement), Guthrie and Koppich (1987) identify five essential preconditions to education reform, which they note—by themselves—are insufficient to trigger significant change, but together are essential ingredients. These factors include (1) a rising economic base, (2) a period of stability preceding a reform effort (as reforms cannot follow one another too closely), (3) a series of preconditions, including a set of precursor ideas, (4) proponents who act as informed champions for change proposals, and (5) a catalytic event.

All these conditions were present by the mid-1980s. Economic prosperity had returned by the mid-1980s. As Mazzoni (1995) notes, “A growing state economy and state fiscal surpluses permitted reformers to pump enough money into the bargaining arena to accommodate conflicting interests. The something-for-everyone compromise, a hallmark of omnibus bills that often were vehicles for school legislation, was made possible on a broad scale by a surge of revenues flowing into state coffers” (p. 57).¹¹ “Accountability” for education and educators had been the subject of substantial legislative and regulatory action throughout the 1970s, with over thirty-five states adopting some

¹¹ As Cyert and March (1983) note, organizational and fiscal slack is a necessary, but not sufficient, precondition to innovation. In the case of Connecticut (as will be described at length in Chapter 4), there was a large budget surplus in the mid-1980s that was instrumental in funding higher teacher salaries, a major component of the Education Enhancement Act.

form of state assessments, minimum competency testing, and comprehensive planning (Mazzoni, 1995). But, as Cibulka and Derlin (1998) note, these accountability frameworks, which often relied on norm-referenced tests, tended to be narrow in scope with no stakes attached to performance. As such, they were only isolated pieces in a larger state policy system, and therefore cannot really be considered as part of a comprehensive education reform initiative. The precursor ideas for the 1980s reforms came in the form of initiatives pioneered in states such as California and Florida, which later were proposed in *A Nation at Risk* (Guthrie and Koppich, 1987). And, as previously noted, the release of the report, *A Nation at Risk*, served as the catalytic event to galvanize public opinion around the need for comprehensive and substantial education reform. As a consequence, nearly half of the states' governors made education their priority in their 1984 state-of-the-state messages. Within the next several years, nearly all states enacted major education reform legislation and all states increased their education budgets (McDonnell and Fuhrman, 1985). What made the reforms of the 1980s different from the public school reform strategies of the 1960s and 1970s (which focused on categorical groups such as the disadvantaged, handicapped or minority students) was that the reforms of the 1980s were about issues of raising academic standards and educational excellence and were directed at the core processes of schooling—that is, who teaches, what is to be learned, and even how it is to be learned (McDonnell and Fuhrman, 1985; Wirt and Kirst, 1997; Mazzoni, 1995). State policy-making was not “politics as usual.” As Mazzoni (1995) notes, “[reform] politics, usually in a short burst of extraordinary policy energy, supplemented or supplanted regular politics. Educational policy-making

transcended traditional subsystem arenas—and their specialized and established legislator, bureaucrat, and lobbyist actors—and played out in broader, more public arenas” (p. 59).

State school politics changed dramatically between the 1970s and 1980s. The appearance of new political actors, including the media, high level commissions, governors, and political elites, not only changed the nature of the dialog about education reform, but were largely responsible for the rapid diffusion of education reform initiatives across the country. What was unusual about the 1980s was the direction and intensity of public opinion. The public believed that education could be improved and was willing to pay for it. In addition, political and business elites were also concerned about education reform (McDonnell and Fuhrman, 1985).

Interstate policy issue networks¹² led by individuals who served as policy brokers played a critical role in translating technical and academic data into “plain English” for other bureaucrats and politicians (Wirt and Kirst, 1997). These “issue-skilled” individuals—both inside and outside of government—formed loose networks that helped to overcome some of the fragmentation of the policy debate over education reform (Fuhrman, 1993). National organizations and networks such as the Education Commission of the States, the National Conference of State Legislatures, Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and National Governors’ Association (NGA) fostered dialog and connections among its political and educational constituencies. In particular,

¹² Hecló (1978) defines policy issue networks as comprising a large number of participants with variable degrees of mutual commitment or of dependence on others in the environment. Unlike members of “iron triangles” who represent a stable set of participants coalesced to control fairly narrow programs in the direct economic interest of each part of the alliance, issue network members move in and out of networks constantly according to their own positions on specific issues.

an NGA-created task force played an integral part in President Bush's 1989 Education Summit by fashioning the six basic educational goals, that were embraced by the President and the Governors. "By 1990... America's 50 governors had projected their collective power on education issues into national as well as state policy arenas, an expression of influence that would have been unthinkable at the decade's outset" (Mazzoni, 1995, p. 66).

One of the most dramatic political changes associated with the 1980s reform movement was the emergence of corporate executives, organizations, and networks as education policy actors. Prior to 1980, their participation in education policy matters was limited, being confined for the most part to school finance and tax limitation measures. After 1980, however, corporate America's interest in broader issues of education policy mushroomed. State Business Roundtables set up task forces, special commissions and study committees. Corporate executives served on many policy commissions created by political leaders. Big business continued its involvement into the wave of "systemic" education reform in the early 1990s. The Business Roundtable, National Alliance of Business, National Association of Manufacturers, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other national business organizations came together to form a coalition to promote education reform nationwide. They set forth nine criteria for identifying the "essential components of a successful education system"¹³ and urged local business leaders to apply these as a standard in conducting a "gap" analysis in their states (Mazzoni, 1995)

¹³ These "essential components of a successful education system" were included in the reform agenda put forth by the Connecticut business community in connection with the Commission on Educational Excellence in Connecticut.

Despite the emergence of big business as a new and significant actor in state policy-making, the influence and impact of the business lobby was not nearly as significant as expected. State business interests were in many instances fragmented and internally split, and not as representative or cohesive as the term “business community” implies. In general, larger businesses failed to build coalitions with smaller businesses and small business organizations (Wirt and Kirst, 1997; Mazzoni, 1995). Furthermore, the business lobby had to operate in highly pluralistic environments in which non-education groups — such as parent, civic, labor, farm and foundation groups—also wanted to influence schools. Business interests were not accustomed to dealing in a political environment, and, in head-to-head conflicts with the legislature, the countervailing power of teachers unions and other education interest groups often significantly restrained the influence of big business (Mazzoni, 1995).¹⁴

With so many new political actors in state school politics, the question arises as to which wielded the most power. Marshall, Mitchell and Wirt (1989), in their study of state education policy activity in six states during the 1980s, concluded that the most influential group in educational policy-making were the “insiders”—such as individual members of the legislature who were representative of the power of specialists within the legislature as a whole. The second most influential group included chief state school officers, state department of education senior staff, education interest groups and teachers’ associations. Governors ranked below teachers’ organizations in influence and barely above legislative

¹⁴ In fact, this is precisely what happened in Connecticut when the business-dominated Commission on Educational Excellence in Connecticut failed to successfully put forth its legislative agenda incorporating the Business Roundtable’s “essential components of a successful education system” in the early 1990s (described in detail in Chapter Four).

staff. State boards of education had the lowest ranking of any *formal* state policy group. Also low-ranking in terms of influence were non-educator interest groups such as business leaders and taxpayers groups, lay groups such as parent-teachers associations and advisory councils, and educational researchers.¹⁵

Wirt and Kirst (1997) note that the state or career bureaucrats who form part of the “professional-bureaucratic complex” or “intergovernmental lobby” also played a significant role in policy shaping, but that this phenomenon still remains one of the most unstudied aspects of the educational policy system. Mazzoni (1995) includes in his definition of “policy entrepreneurs,” officials, managers and specialists in SDEs, who exerted behind-the-scenes influences on the education reform movements of the 1980s. “In some states, these ‘bureaucrats’ took advantage of the agenda prominence of school reform to put forward their preferred solutions and maneuver them into enactments” (p. 59). Marshall, Mitchell and Wirt (1989) comment that, “It is important to remember that those who are in for the long term, such as the bureaucrats, may accrue long-term influence which is less obvious than that of legislators or governors who must show results and get attention to maintain their position” (p. 19). This observation suggests that the effectiveness and influence of bureaucratic policy-making has long been underestimated because it is much less visible to the public and others.

Educational subject-matter organizations, considered an extragovernmental group, also assumed greater influence on educational policy in the 1980s, although having had relatively little influence on policy prior to that time. By the late 1980s, the pioneering

¹⁵ The author, as both an educational researcher and policy analyst, cannot help noting the irony of this research finding.

work of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) in developing curricular and evaluation standards began to have a widespread impact on state policies related to curriculum content and teacher preparation (Mazzoni, 1995). Following the lead of NCTM, other disciplinary and subject area groups (such as the National Council of Teachers of English, the National Science Teachers Association, the Labor Department Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills [SCANS]) began the process of developing and disseminating curriculum and evaluation standards for their respective subject areas as well as determining the competencies necessary for the world of work. Warren-Little (1993) comments that the "subject matter associations are professional communities that extend well beyond the school walls, and are independent of the employing organizations but positioned to exert strong influence on teachers' dispositions towards reform proposals. To the extent that an association's most active members occupy leadership roles within their school, districts, or collective bargaining units, the association's effect may be multiplied" (pp. 135-136). These non-governmental entities also served to put pressures on the larger culture to support reforms of the system as a whole (Fuhrman, 1993).

Despite the expanding influence of external private interest groups, professional reformers, and organizations of professional educators in the 1980s, these groups tended to make suggestions for only marginal changes in proposed new state policies. Instead, primary control of education policy in the mid-1980s rested with the state-level policy makers and state departments of education (Wirt and Kirst, 1997; Fullan, 1991). The agenda for the 1980s reforms encompassed a much broader range of policy objectives than

in any other previous period of state policy-making (Fuhrman & Elmore, 1990). As Mazzoni (1995) has aptly observed, "Certainly the states, more than ever, have become *de facto* as well as *de jure* policy makers for the schools." (p. 53).

The momentum of the 1980s state-based education reform wave continued into the 1990s, demonstrating what Gideonse (1993) called, the "almost incredible resilience of the education reform movement in America." The next chapter will examine the next "waves" of reform approaches that emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s, including "school restructuring" and "systemic reform." The shortcomings of these new reform strategies to meet expectations and to change educational practices at the school and district level serve to illustrate how remarkably resilient schools and educational practitioners are in maintaining current practice and resisting change. As Wirt and Kirst (1997) note about the recurring tides of educational reform:

Spawned by some scholarly "scribbler," funded by foundations, transmitted by educators' meetings and journals, researched and certified by schools of education, reform ideas sweep through the American school system in recurring tides. Some are transitory, for example, Nixon's Right to Read Program, but others leave a permanent mark on schools, such as desegregation in the South. Behind them all, however, small or large, is someone's notion of the preferable, the efficient, the humane, the inexpensive, and the just in matters of schooling (pp. 46-47).

The shortcomings of the reform efforts of the 1980s and 1990s, however, do not argue for a reduction in the role of states in education policy-making, but rather that states as institutions need to alter the understandings of policy issues by employing alternative models of policy-making, making careful and strategic choices about the policy instruments they employ to leverage change in educational institutions, and creating new roles for bureaucrats.

CHAPTER 3

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN POLICY INTENTIONS AND POLICY OUTCOMES: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO POLICY-MAKING

The optimistic promises of the 1980s reform movement were slow to be realized. The high standards being promoted in the 1980s reform movements demanded both additional resources and time to build capacity for schools and teachers. But, as Fuhrman (1993) notes, politicians seldom take long-term perspectives. “Admirable attributes such as restraint and patience are thought to be in short supply among political leaders, not because of any innate shortcomings, but because the system provides incentives for opposing traits. The system attracts and rewards action, not restraint, and eagerness, not patience” (p. 7). It was hardly surprising, then, that the economic recession of the early 1990s produced a backlash in some states against a strong state role in education as well as proposals for new reform strategies such as “restructuring reforms” (which focused on changing the organization and management of public schools) and “systemic education reform” (a reform strategy with a strong rational appeal based on the concept of promoting coherence within the education system by aligning policy approaches). This chapter will describe these two important education reform strategies in K-12 education that emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s and their shortcomings, examine the unique characteristics of educational institutions and why “rational” or production models of education reform are largely unsuccessful, and propose an alternative conception of policy-making grounded in the notion of policy-making as a process of persuasion and learning. I will then discuss the implications of this model on the choice of policy

instruments used by government and the roles of bureaucrats. The theoretical background will also be laid for understanding what made Connecticut's model of policy-making different from that of other states and how its choice of policy tools to leverage change enabled those reforms to persist well into the 1990s. The last part of this chapter describes entrepreneurship within the public sector and proposes that bureaucratic policy-making is an outgrowth of a model of policy-making based on ideas and persuasion.

The Restructuring and Systemic Reform Movements of the late 1980s and 1990s

Observers of the history of education reform initiatives often blame their failures to bring about the envisioned changes on the system's many layers of governance (federal, state, and local) and decentralized structures. Fuhrman (1993) notes that, "Policies and projects, often in conflict with one another, wash over the system without substantial effect on the conventional and unambitious content and pedagogy characterizing many classrooms" (p. xii). The reforms that have tended to "last" have been ones that have made little real significant difference in educational practices or broadly impacted the system. These include (1) structural add-ons that do not disturb the standard operating procedures of schools or demand fundamental change in the existing behavior of teachers, (2) innovations codified in state law or regulations that are easily monitored and financed by the state or federal government, (3) reforms that create new educational clienteles (such as businesses which lobby for vocational training), and (4) reforms proposed and implemented by school administrators and teachers themselves that make their work easier

or more efficient or that improve their professional status (Tyack, 1991; Wirt and Kirst, 1997).

While the 1980s reform movements differed from previous efforts in terms of encompassing a much broader range of policy objectives than any previous period of state policy-making, most of the reforms involved increasing state control over the classroom through the imposition of mandates and rules, rather than through inducements. This “first wave”¹ of reforms has been characterized as a top-down, legalistic approach that focused on changing academic content and introducing higher standards for teachers and students (Elmore, 1990; Fuhrman & Elmore, 1990; Mazzoni, 1995). The expectation was that policy implemented through law or regulation would produce the desired results. This input-output mode of viewing policy-making had been challenged by earlier implementation research studies such as the RAND change agent study,² which showed that regulations were imprecisely and differentially from place to place, with no significant effects on outcome measures. Instead, the key to policy success was local leadership and motivation (Darling-Hammond, 1990; McLaughlin, 1991; Odden, 1991; Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984). Thus, the top-down approaches of the mid-1980s failed to take into account the planning of implementation and the importance of local capacity and will to make change.

¹ A number of scholars (Mazzoni, 1995; Elmore, 1990) have referred to these movements as “waves,” but, since some of them were actually occurring simultaneously, they are better referred to as “approaches.”

² A study from 1973 to 1978 of four federally funded programs whose goals were to introduce and support innovative practices in schools, the findings of which were that implementation dominates outcomes, or that local choices on how to put a policy into practice were more important than technology, program design, funding levels or governance requirements (McLaughlin, 1991).

An alternative approach to education reform emerged in the late 1980s which shifted attention away from bureaucratic controls and obtrusive regulation by federal, state and local government and instead promoted decentralization of authority and changes in the organization and management of schools. Called "school restructuring," its goal was to empower teachers, students and parents to play a more influential role in determining what schools do (Elmore, 1990; Mazzoni, 1975). State-sponsored initiatives in "school restructuring," foundation-supported special projects, and projects sponsored by teachers associations in concert with local schools and districts emerged in nearly every state (Warren-Little, 1993). Restructuring was concerned mainly with changing the governance systems of schools as well as authority and accountability systems, with the expectation that the people working in them would work towards serious, sustained engagement in academic learning, or "teaching for understanding" (Elmore, 1990; Darling-Hammond, 1990).

Restructuring as a reform strategy was attractive to policy makers because it evaded two politically controversial subjects: the need to reach consensus over outcome goals for schooling and the need to secure additional resources to implement the reforms. By focusing on the social organization or schooling instead of the "content" of that schooling (or specification of what skills and knowledge both students and teachers needed to have), restructuring as a reform strategy was essentially "content-free" (Goertz, Floden and O'Day, 1995). As Fuhrman (1993) observes,

By letting content expectations devolve to the school, policymakers can evade such difficult decisions. Furthermore, if, as some analysts assert, society's interest in education lies primarily in credentialing in such a way that preserves economic and social inequity, there is little reason to bother with content expectations (p. 4).

The absence of explicit consensus around content expectations or outcomes results in a *de facto emphasis* on low-level skills, thereby avoiding the political pitfalls associated with establishing high standards for students. These include demands for additional resources by those expected to meet the standards and a backlash from implementers, who feel unfairly held to an impossible-to-attain standard (Fuhrman, 1993).

As a consequence, restructuring was particularly appealing to policy makers because its emphasis on the redistribution of authority to make improvements effectively served as a substitute for allocating additional dollars. Without providing resources to pay for the incremental costs of the change process or building the political will and organizational capacity for change at the local district level, restructuring reform efforts were essentially doomed to failure (Cohen, 1990).

In the early 1990s, attempts were made to address the shortcomings of both the top-down reform mandates of the 1980s and the content-free, ambiguous nature of the restructuring reform movement by proposing a third approach to education reform, called "systemic reform." The rationale for implementing a more "systemic" approach to education reform was that it would overcome the lack of coherence between policy and practice and the tendency to address each problem with a distinct program. Furthermore, systemic reform was intended to overcome the fragmented, piecemeal nature of most education reform initiatives by centralizing strategies through a mandatory system of strong instructional guidance coming from the state (Clune, 1993). A strong role for the

state made systemic reform very different from the “restructuring reform agenda,” which promoted decentralization of authority and devolution of control to the local level.

Definitions of systemic reform vary widely according to the user’s premises, predilections and purposes. “In some cases, it means, simply, comprehensive or all-encompassing. When it is used this way the premise seems to be the judgment that lots of things are out of whack, and they all need to be fixed simultaneously” (Gideonse, 1993). Tyack (1990) defines systemic reform as a “synonym for the market mechanism of choice, or teacher professionalization and empowerment, or decentralization and school site management, or involving parents more in their children’s education, or national standards in curriculum with tests to match, or deregulation, or new forms of accountability, or basic changes in curriculum and instruction, or some or all of these in combination” (p. 504). More hopeful reformers claim it embodies three integral components—namely, the promotion of ambitious student outcomes for all students; alignment of policy approaches and the action of various policy institutions to promote such outcomes; and restructuring the education governance system to support improved achievement (Goertz, Floden & O’Day, 1995).

Recent studies of systemic reform initiatives have indicated that results have fallen significantly short of expectations. Studies of California’s mathematics reform (Cohen and Hill, 1998), which has been considered a model systemic reform effort, indicate that significant disjunctures between state policy and local practice exist despite concerted efforts to bring about alignment between policies. California was one of the first states in the 1980s to redesign state policies and other mechanisms specific to instructional policy

(including student curriculum, assessments, and professional development) to improve student achievement. Despite evidence that there is a modest relationship between classroom practice related to the California curriculum frameworks and the higher performance of students on the state assessments, a 1994 study indicated that the teaching practice of only fifteen to twenty percent of the state's teachers was impacted by the reforms.³ Cohen and Hill (1996) comment that, "The obstacles fit with what we know about fragmentation in the U.S. public education system: it is more a non-system, a sprawling organization that makes it difficult to organize coherent and concerted action within even a single modest-sized school district, let alone an entire state" (p. 11). This fragmentation also makes it difficult to determine whether or not a reform has had the desired effect in the classroom or whether teachers even understand the nature and purpose of the reforms. Goertz, Floden and O'Day's (1995) study of twelve reforming schools in three states (California, Michigan and Vermont) provides further evidence that teachers often are ill-equipped to implement these reforms.

State leaders must realize that setting out a framework for what should be taught and learned in school will not result in much change if teachers do not know the content or how to teach it. It is critical that state and localities follow guidance given to teachers with the opportunity to learn what they need to know to make appropriate use of that guidance. This was a theme across schools, across districts, and across states... (pp. 153-154).

³ In 1994, following the 1994 administration of the California Learning Assessment System (CLAS) in which scores were generally low, the Governor canceled the testing program, thereby eliminating any link between the California Mathematics Framework and a state accountability system (Cohen and Hill, 1996).

Cohen (1996) similarly notes that the problem in implementing the systemic reform initiatives was that no states envisioned teacher education as an engine of reform.⁴ Although it was conceded that teachers would need help to learn, the expectation was that by making schools more accountable for students' performance in new assessments, professionals would get the message and instruction would become more demanding and coherent. Despite growth in state instructional policy, local instructional policy remains largely unaffected.

The states have used a diverse array of policy instruments—new instructional standards or frameworks, new curriculum guidance, revised testing programs, and even revamped professional education—but local education authorities have continued to act as though they had undiminished authority to make instructional policy... Local school policymaking is generally more active and influential now than it was in the late 1960s and 1970s, despite more active state guidance for instruction (Cohen, 1996, p. 107).

Like the top-down, legalistic approaches to education reform in the mid-1980s, systemic reform efforts also faced problems related to the unmanageability of top-down regulation in a fragmented governance system. Clune (1993) observed that, "...[T]he challenge is to design policies [at the level of the local district and school] that combine the high standards of systemic policy with a broad diversity of curricular options and a powerful local delivery system" (p. 234). To do so, however, requires building capacity within local school districts—that is, the capacity to understand what the reform movement really means and what skills and knowledge are needed to implement those changes. Teachers will not function as agents of state or local instructional policy without

⁴ The Connecticut case study refutes Cohen's statements, as both standards for teachers and professional development were viewed as integral to the state's education reform initiative.

substantial investments in sustained, ongoing professional development and opportunities for sustained collaboration and inquiry (Darling-Hammond, 1993; Cohen and Hill, 1998, Warren-Little, 1993). Darling-Hammond (1993) explains that,

Reforms that rely on the transformative power of individuals to rethink their practice and to redesign their institutions can be accomplished only by investing in individual and organizational learning, in the human capital of the educational enterprise—the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teachers and administrators, as well as those of parents and community members (p. 754).

In addition to identifying the fragmentation of the American political system and the lack of attention to teacher professional development as problems in the implementation of systemic education reform, Goertz, Floden and O'Day (1995) identify a third problem—the public's lack of understanding or acceptance of the current reform agenda. Studies conducted by the Public Agenda in 1994 and 1995 conclude that,

The American public is remarkably clear about what it wants from public schools. Public Agenda's research on education, along with studies by many other groups, shows that people want safe, orderly schools where all children learn at least basic skills, and more if possible. Americans from all walks of life, in every demographic group and in every part of the country, endorse the very same list of priorities—safety, order, and the basics (Johnson, 1995, p. 11).

It is evident that systemic reform, which appears on the surface to be a coherent and sensible model of education reform, is much more complex and elusive for both educators and the public to grasp. Furthermore, it attempts to impose a highly structured, centralized, rational model of education reform upon a decentralized, loosely structured system with no clear consensus as to educational outcomes and fails to recognize the imperative need to build the knowledge base and capacity of educators in order to alter

current practice. The next section of this chapter will examine the unique characteristics of educational institutions that make the system so difficult to reform and why rational decision-making or “production” models of education reform, such as the systemic reform movement of the 1990s, are largely unsuccessful.

The Unique Characteristics of Educational Institutions or Why Rational or “Production” Models of Education Reform Don’t Work

As noted in the preceding section of this chapter, the reasons for the gap between the visions of the state-based education reform efforts of the 1980s and early 1990s and their implementation are complex. The top-down approaches of the mid-1980s failed to take into account the planning of implementation and the importance of local capacity and will to make change. Sykes (1990) points out that there was inadequate attention to teaching as the “core technology of schooling,” which he defines as “socially constructed”: “When the work itself is nonroutine and cannot be reduced to standard operating procedures, and when the outcomes of the work are not open to easy scrutiny, task definitions rise out of social interactions and negotiations within the workplace” (p. 245). Even when teachers are recognized as the agents for educational change, their lack of sophistication and grasp of academic knowledge has thwarted state and federal efforts to affect instruction (Cohen, 1996; Cohen & Spillane, 1993). Furthermore, there is an absence of consensus around the purposes and outcomes of public education, both among educational professionals and the public.

The shortcomings of the systemic education reform model lie in the fact that it is based on a rationalistic view of the policy-making and policy implementation process that runs counter to the structural and organizational characteristics of educational institutions. Rational decision-making or “production models” of policy-making are ones in which policy is created in a fairly orderly sequence of stages, almost as if on an assembly line. Stone (1988) characterizes them as follows:

Many political scientists, in fact, speak of “assembling the elements” of policy. An issue is “placed on the agenda,” and gets defined; it moves through the legislative and executive branches of government where alternative solutions are proposed, analyzed, legitimized, selected, and refined; a solution is implemented by the executive agencies and constantly challenged and revised by interested actors, perhaps using the executive branch; and finally, if the policy-making process is managerially sophisticated, it provides a means of evaluating and revising implemented solutions (p. 7).

This production model of policy-making, which also fits the “classical” model of policy administration, grew out of the ideas of scholars such as Max Weber, Woodrow Wilson, Frederick Taylor, and Luther Gulick, whose values were rooted in rationality, scientific management, hierarchical relationships, and the separation of policy-making from policy implementation.⁵ Similarly, progressive education reformers at the turn of the century

⁵Max Weber’s theory of social and economic organization is centered around the idea that the effectiveness of legal authority rests on creating a bureaucratic type of administrative agency with a clearly defined hierarchical structure, capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency through the development of modern technology and formally the most rational known means of carrying out imperative control over human beings (Weber, 1947). Frederick Taylor’s principles of scientific management or task management promoted uniformity and efficiency in organizations by the division of labor and the replacement of the judgment of the individual workman with the establishment of many rules, laws and formulae (Taylor, 1947). Woodrow Wilson (1941) believed that the object of administrative study was to discover what government can properly and successfully do with utmost possible efficiency and at the least possible cost of either money or energy. In addition, administration and politics were to be kept separate. Luther Gulick (1937) laid out his theory of organization based on span of control, unity of command, technical efficiency, and institutionalization of management functions.

placed their faith in an ideology of rational deliberation, the application of technical information, consensus-building, and the “de-politicization” of education (Cibulka, 1996; Timar, 1997; Ravitch, 1984).

Policy-making models built around the idea of rational decision-making in organizations (of which the systemic education reform movement is an excellent example) continue to have widespread appeal, despite being challenged and gradually unraveled by organizational theorists over the last half century. Simon (1976), for example, created an administrative theory based upon the idea that there is uncertainty in and limits to rationality within organizations. Because the supply of information in organizations exceeds the capacity of its members to assimilate it all, decision-making becomes a process of “satisficing” rather than “maximizing.” Organizations tend to do what they have done in the past not because it is the best of all possible worlds, but because it is known and comprehensible. Uncertainty is a fundamental problem for complex organizations, and coping with uncertainty is the essence of the administrative process. Organizations are problem-facing and problem-solving entities characterized by “bounded rationality,” in which only those variables necessary for purposeful action are considered, thereby reducing complexity and eliminating uncertainty (Cyert and March, 1963; Thompson, 1967).

March and Olsen’s (1976) “garbage can theory” further elaborated upon the idea that decision-making in organizations is an irrational process.

Suppose we view a choice opportunity as a garbage can into which various problems and solutions are dumped by participants. The mix of garbage in a single can depends partly on the labels attached to the alternative cans; but it also depends on what garbage is being produced at the moment, on the mix of cans

available, and on the speed with which garbage is collected and removed from the scene....In a garbage can situation, a decision is an outcome or an interpretation of several relatively independent "streams" within an organization (p. 26).

Within the garbage can process, decision-making is often a function of timing rather than consequential order. Thus, important decisions are made predominantly by *flight* (when a "more attractive" decision comes along, thereby eliminating the need for choice) and *oversight* (when choice is dictated by where a minimum of time and energy can be spent), whereas unimportant decisions were often made by *resolution*. The drift of decisions is not random, but occurs in the context of the beliefs and norms of the institution in which they occur (March and Olsen, 1989).

Another important scholar who contributed to the development of new organizational theories was Karl Weick (1976) who developed the concept of "loose coupling" as the language for analyzing decision-making in complex organizations. He referred to educational organizations as "loosely coupled" systems, in which things are tied together weakly or with minimal interdependence.

In summary, then, the new organizational theorists no longer defined organizations by their rationality, but by their non-rational, social and cultural properties. Interest expression and conflict are seen as commonplace. Leadership and decision-making are as much concerned with preserving organizational form and maintaining power by those in leadership positions, than by the rational pursuit of goals or the representation of member interests (Mitchell, 1996).

In addition to the contributions of the new organizational theory to explaining why educational organizations do not operate as rational and efficient entities, the “new institutionalism” helps explain the phenomenon in schools of “this curious situation of altering everything while changing nothing” (Mitchell, 1996). The recent institutionalist revival,⁶ rests on the premise that political struggles are mediated in the institutional setting in which they take place, and that institutions structure the battles and influence the outcomes (Steinmo, Thelen, and Longstreth, 1992). Thus, the architecture of institutions count, the rules by which they do business matter, and there are consequences to meanings vested in procedures. Institutional structures become important because they shape the incentives for individual behavior, which often have collective consequences. Furthermore, institutions structure conflicts or the collaboration of interests, thereby defining the terms under which bargaining takes place (Rockman, 1994). In fact, the function of institutions is to channel conflict, as institutions do not treat all forms of conflict impartially (Schattschneider, 1975).

Such theories provide insights in understanding the difficulties of changing practice in schools. Crowson, Boyd, and Mawhinney (1996) comment that,

⁶ An important conceptual dimension of the new institutionalism is that the preferences of the state are at least as important as those of civil society in accounting for what a democratic state does or does not do, in contrast to society-centered perspectives. State officials may purposefully bring about a shift in societal preferences to make them congruent with their own (Nordlinger, 1981). Another important concept is that of state autonomy, in which the state formulates and pursues policies that are not simply reflective of the demands and interests of social groups, classes or society, but arise from the intellectual activities of civil administrators who diagnose social problems and frame alternatives (what Skocpol terms “nonconstitutionally ruling officials”) (Evans, Reuschmeyer and Skocpol, 1985).

The central importance of the new institutionalism for educators is that it re-established a special interest in the political and social significance of institutions while it simultaneously warns that the reform movement in education must address some “deep structure” issues in the organization of schooling and in relationships between schools and the larger society (p. 2).

Thus, the standard operating procedures, cultures and structures of institutions such as schools define the values, norms, interests, identities and beliefs of their members, and make it very difficult for external forces to change professional norms and practices or the process by which decision-making occurs.

These new organizational and institutional theories are useful in explaining why organizational change is so difficult and why many school reform efforts fail at the implementation stage. The messiness, discontinuity, and non-rationality of the policy implementation process is captured by Bardach’s metaphor of implementation games. Bardach (1977) views the implementation process as a series of pressures and counterpressures, bargaining and maneuvering, pushing and hauling of the policy-adoption process. Actors are more concerned about what they might lose than what they might gain. The outcomes of such defensive politics is delay, diversion of resources, deflection of policy goals, resistance of efforts to control behavior administratively, and dissipation of personal and political energies through game-playing. Firestone (1989) extends Bardach’s implementation game metaphor to define educational policy as an “ecology of games.” The absence of any controlling, centralizing rationality results in different people playing a variety of games designed to achieve their own ends. He notes that, “‘Policy’ as a chain of decisions stretching from the statehouse to the classroom is a by-product of

those games and relationships; no one is responsible for the whole thing" (p. 23). It is hardly surprising that the policies that are put in practice are not necessarily those that were originally envisioned. "As programs are altered by their environments and organizations are affected by their programs, mutual adaptation changes both the context and content of what is implemented." (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984, p. xvii).

As a result, policy changes are more likely to be incremental⁷ or "first order" changes (modest adjustments to existing systems) rather than "second order" changes (basic changes in the system itself). Fullan (1991) observes that countless efforts at educational change fail because they do not impact the culture of the school and the profession of teaching. "Most changes since the turn of the century have been first order changes aimed to improve the quality of what already existed. Second order changes largely failed" (p. 29).

It is specifically the nature of schools and institutions as "loosely coupled" organizations and educators as "street-level bureaucrats" that make rational decision-making or production models of education reform ineffective. As Wirt and Kirst (1997) note,

This is the tendency of educational organizations to disconnect policies from outcomes, means from ends, and structure or rules from actual activity. Such a nonstructure puts the teacher's behavior beyond the control of the central office and principal, who themselves have no chain of command with straight lines and precise directions for teaching policy. With such disjointed relationships, one would not expect program innovations originating from outside the local unit to have much impact (p. 189).

⁷ Lindblom's (1980) notion of incrementalism refuted the idea of policy-making as an orderly, rational process, and promoted instead the notion of implementation and agenda-building often collapsing into one another and policy as being sometimes formed as a political compromise among policy makers.

Gideonse (1993), however, views loose coupling in educational organizations less as an impediment to be overcome, but should be understood instead as *"a necessary condition for the successful performance of complicated professional and moral responsibilities demanding autonomy at the site of its performance"* (p. 414, emphasis in original).

Crowson, Boyd and Mawhinney (1996) note that the looseness of decision making in educational bureaucracies also provides opportunities for enterprising principals who know how to get what they want for their school from the system.

Teachers, often referred to as "street level bureaucrats," frequently resist the reform initiatives imposed by the "top" of the education system (Odden, 1991).⁸

Teachers, when confronted with new state policies in their districts, often adapt or modify those policies, because their professional ties and their affiliations with educators across the education system are frequently stronger than district ties (Spillane, 1998).

Furthermore, teachers have invented a practical pedagogy tailored to fit their beliefs and classroom practices as a means of coping with organizational constraints. Cuban (1995) points out that, "...teachers have invented and polished a repertoire of teacher-centered instructional practices that have emerged as resilient, imaginative, and efficient solutions to dealing with a crowd of students in a small space for extended periods of time" (p. 8).

Unlike other professions which have managerial controls to monitor practice, teachers

⁸ Lipsky (1980) observed that street level bureaucrats are professionals who exercise considerable discretion. They work in situations too complicated to be reduced to programmatic formats and in situations that require responses to the human dimensions in situations. Along those lines, Yin and Yates (1974) define street level governments as ones which have "server-served" relationships (e.g., policeman-citizen, teacher-parent, doctor-patient), in which clients typically have some influence in server policies.

operate under little scrutiny by school board members and their appointed managers about what they do in the classroom or how students learn.

Creating the political will and organizational capacity for change at the local level is a critical precondition and ingredient in school reform (Cohen, 1990), but it is clear that this cannot be achieved by mandate or decree. Instead, new policy approaches and strategies of influence are needed to modify the culture and capacities of local school districts and the knowledge, skills, and beliefs of individual educators. This suggests that an alternative model of policy-making is needed that is grounded in the concept of shaping ideas and creating incentives for individuals as well as groups.

Alternative Approaches and Tools For Policy-making

This section of the chapter will begin by describing two competing political models of policy-making that represent very different world views: (1) a model based on self-interest (a category in which rational or production models of policy-making fit), and (2) a model grounded in the concept of policy-making as a struggle for ideas. The first model views society as a market; the second sees society as a political community (Stone, 1988). I will argue that, by viewing policy-making as a struggle for ideas and politics as a process of persuasion and learning, states as institutions can alter ideas and understanding of policy issues through the careful choice of policy instruments that employ incentives, inducements, and capacity-building traits.

Self-interest Models of Policy-making

Self-interest models of policy-making are grounded in the principles of neo-classical microeconomics that state that people act in their own self-interest, rather than from any form of altruism or sense of public interest (McDonnell, 1991). These concepts first appeared in utilitarian thought⁹ advanced by such scholars as Henry Sedgwick and Jeremy Bentham. Its basic concept is that, "Society is rightly ordered, and therefore just, when its major institutions are arranged so as to achieve the greatest net balance of satisfaction summed over all the individuals belonging to it" (Rawls, 1971). Welfare economics adopted the major premises of utilitarianism by advancing the idea that societal welfare depends only on individuals' subjective senses of satisfaction, and that satisfaction is best achieved by letting individuals' preferences determine the use of societal resources (Rhoads, 1985). These economic theories have subsequently been applied to the study of political rationality, in which democratic governments are viewed to act rationally to maximize political support. Society is viewed as a market, not just a political community (Stone 1988). The focus is on rationality in all aspects of life, not just economic rationality (Lowi, 1979). Parties in democratic politics are seen as analogous to entrepreneurs in a profit-seeking economy. To attain their ends, they must formulate policies that they believe will gain the most votes. Furthermore, the assumption is that citizens act rationally in politics (Downs, 1957). A market model applied to politics also assumes that individuals make decisions based on complete and accurate information

⁹ Rawls (1971) presents a detailed discussion of Utilitarianism theory in his seminal work, *A Theory of Justice*.

(Stone, 1988). In order to deal with asymmetries of information and imperfect competition, organized interests engage in bargaining and accommodations (Lowi, 1979).

Pluralism and interest group politics¹⁰ are based on the principle that there are many sources of power and control other than the state (Heclo, 1974). Critics of pluralist and interest group theory argue that these groups make claims on the resources of society to satisfy their members, but have little or no incentive to consider the cost of their activities on the economy and society as a whole. Only when interest groups are large enough to encompass large segments of society will their calculations of self-interest merge with an appreciation of the overall consequences of their actions (Olsen, 1982). Lowi (1979) criticizes pluralist theory for promoting the myth that when competition between or among groups takes place, a public interest or other ideal emerges. In fact, interest groups act more often as veto groups by blocking agenda items or proposing substitutions for proposals already on the agenda, rather than acting as initiators of particular approaches or alternatives (Heclo, 1974; Kingdon, 1995). Schattschneider (1975) further questioned the validity of the proposition that special interests are a universal form of political organizations that reflects *all* interests.

The vice of the groupist theory is that it conceals the most significant aspects of the system. The flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent. Probably about 90 percent of the people cannot get into the pressure system (p. 34-5).

¹⁰ A more complete description of interest group theory can be found in David Truman's *The Governmental Process* (New York: Knopf, 1982); Mancur Olsen's *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965); James Q. Wilson's *Political Organizations* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), and Terry Moe's *The Organization of Interests* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

In conclusion, self-interest models of policy-making are grounded in the notion that political institutions are arenas for conflict and are shaped primarily by external forces. Order is based on rationality and exchange, and leadership involves the brokering of coalitions among interests. This is what March and Olsen (1989) describe as an aggregative political process, in which majority rule outweighs any notion of a polity with shared purposes.

An Alternative Model of Policy-making as the Struggle Over Ideas

Political institutions can also be seen as being shaped by “integrative” processes. In this context, institutions function as decision-makers (hence, also political actors) based upon not only constitutions, laws, and other stable rules, but also on a sense of moral obligation and trusteeship for social traditions and future needs. In an integrative political process, policy experts within the political system develop and shape the understanding of policy issues and alternatives.¹¹

The notion that politics creates, confirms or modifies interpretations of life is not new—in fact, as noted by March and Olsen (1989), it can be found in the writings of Aristotle and Plato. “Politics is regarded as education, as a place for discovering, elaborating, and expressing meanings, establishing shared (or opposing) conceptions of

¹¹ Cibulka (1996) notes that “the institutionalization of public schooling in the USA has led to a model of governance which, while still officially an integrative model, is in fact aggregative. The ineffectiveness of school boards, the advent of regulatory federalism, evidenced by external dependence and fragmented bureaucratization, are all examples of this trend toward an aggregative order. The fact that this aggregative model has been ‘tacked on’ to an earlier integrative model of governance contributes to an incoherence of the present institutional system” (p. 15).

experience, values, and the nature of existence” (p. 48). Majone (1989) comments that policy development is in some cases shaped more by changes in belief and values than by changes in economic and political interests, and cites the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as well as environmental protection laws as pertinent examples.

Related to the notion of politics as a struggle over ideas is that of politics as a learning process. In situations of great cognitive complexity, rationality often presents itself through the process of learning (Majone, 1989). Heclo (1974) notes that, “Politics finds its sources not only in power but also in uncertainty—men collectively wondering what to do... Governments not only ‘power’... they also puzzle. Policy-making is a form of collective puzzlement on society’s behalf; it entails both deciding and knowing” (p. 305). Furthermore, public policies are not only outputs, but also important inputs into the political process through the learning and feedback process that occurs (Pierson, 1993). Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993), in describing their advocacy coalition framework for policy change, observe that policy coalitions are organized around common beliefs in core elements, and that public policies can be conceptualized in the same manner as belief systems—that is, as sets of value priorities and causal assumptions about how to realize them. Policy-oriented learning is instrumental—that is, members of various coalitions seek to better understand the world in order to further their policy objectives.

If one views policy-making as the shaping of ideas and creation of incentives for individual behavior as well as for groups, then conceptions of political leadership and the role of the state and political institutions alter. The classical idea of leadership emphasizes the role of the leader as broker—by providing information, identifying possible coalitions,

facilitating side payments and the development of logrolling. An alternative view is that the leader serves as a transformer of preferences (both that of leader and follower). Leaders interact with other leaders and are co-opted with new beliefs and commitments. March and Olsen (1989) explain that, "The leadership role is one of educator, stimulating and accepting changing world views, redefining meanings, and exciting commitments. Such a view is more conspicuous in theories that assume a more autonomous role for political institutions" (p. 163). Such a theory of leadership aligns with a concept of policy-making and politics as a process of persuasion and learning.

Alternative Policy-making Tools

The preceding sections have described the shortcomings of self-interest or rational models of policy-making as well as the complexity of the institutional environment of the American public education system. In this context, it is not surprising that the traditional tools of state power such as mandates don't work, and that new instruments of government action are needed which are based upon a view of policy-making as bargaining and persuasion (Salamon, 1989). Stone (1988) defines policy instruments as "strategies for structuring relationships and coordinating behavior to achieve collective purposes...the strategies we call policy instruments are all ways of exerting power, of getting people to do what they otherwise might not do" (p. 208). Policy instruments become the mechanisms that translate substantive policy goals (such as improved student

achievement or increasing the quality of teachers into the profession) into concrete actions (McDonnell and Elmore, 1991).

Stone (1988) identifies five forms of policy instruments: (1) “inducements”—changing people’s behavior with rewards, punishments, incentives or sanctions; (2) “rules”—commands to act or not act in certain ways, usually backed by rewards or punishments; (3) “facts”—strategies that change people’s behavior by operating on their minds and perception of the world; (4) “rights”—strategies that allow individuals, groups or organizations to invoke government power on their behalf; and (5) “powers”—strategies that seek to alter the content of decisions by shifting the process of decision-making to other people.

In a similar manner, McDonnell and Elmore (1991) define four generic classes of policy instruments: *mandates* (rules governing the action of individuals and agencies, intended to produce compliance), *inducements* (transfer of money to individuals and agencies in return for certain actions), *capacity building* (transfer of money for investment in material, intellectual or human resources, and *system changing* (transfer of authority among individuals and agencies in order to alter the system by which goods and services are delivered). McDonnell and Elmore point out that, in education, for example, policy makers often turn to mandates by default, because they lack information about the full range of policy instruments, their feasibility, and likely effects. However, in states where the political culture supports strong local control norms, state policy makers are less likely to enact mandates than in states where the notion of a strong central government is widely accepted.

McDonnell (1994) describes another category of policy instrument—a symbolic or “horatory” instrument. Horatory instruments rely on persuasion, rather than rules, money or authority to motivate actions. They assume that people are motivated from within and decide whether or not to take policy-related actions. She points out that assessment¹² fits the notion of an horatory instrument, as it appeals to people’s beliefs and values (for example, the notion of excellence or “world class” standards). McDonnell cites California and Connecticut as two states that define the accountability uses of assessment in much the same way that Stone (1988) discusses persuasive policy instruments. Both states report scores to parents and report school, district, and state scores publicly.¹³ The assumption is that the concerned public will act on that information to pressure improvements when necessary. She contrasts Connecticut’s and California’s approach to Kentucky, where accountability has been defined in a manner closer to regulation than persuasion—that is, through regulatory policies with tangible consequences for compliance (monetary rewards) and non-compliance (sanctions on schools and possible dismissals of school staff).

If the goal of state education policy is to alter the political climate and culture of local school districts, then state education agencies need to make changes to their organizational capacity and structure (Cohen, 1990). Evaluation, research and policy analysis capabilities must be strengthened by collecting and reporting more data, and new

¹² McDonnell discusses assessment as a policy instrument in the context of student assessment, but her argument is equally applicable to teacher assessment.

¹³ As noted in Chapter 3, California’s statewide testing program to which McDonnell refers was eliminated in 1984.

models of technical assistance must be developed to help local educators define problems and devise their own imaginative solutions. If alternative policy instruments such as assessment and accountability systems are to be successfully implemented as tools of persuasion, then the roles of bureaucrats need to change, too.

Alternative Roles for Bureaucrats

The last section of this chapter will present a theoretical framework for interpreting the nature of bureaucratically-driven state-level education reform in Connecticut and the emergence of individuals who functioned as “bureaucratic entrepreneurs.” Two main ideas will be discussed: (1) the role of administrative actors (or bureaucrats) in not just promoting and implementing policy, but creating new policies, and (2) how bureaucratic entrepreneurship can play an important role in creating innovative organizations and sustaining policy innovation over time.

Although entrepreneurship has been most frequently defined in the context of business and the private sector, both popular and scholarly interest in entrepreneurship as a phenomenon within the public sector has emerged in recent years. For example, calls for “entrepreneurial government” have become widespread among politicians (including President Bill Clinton) in the context of “reinventing government” (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993). At first blush, the notion of “bureaucratic entrepreneurship” may seem to be an oxymoron, as it challenges traditional conceptions of the role of bureaucrats.

The Weberian notion of the trained official in a position of authority who impartially and impersonally fulfills his office (Weber, 1947) was an inherent component of the “classical model” of public administration, in which there was a sharp dichotomy between politics and administration. Even today, bureaucrats are often considered to be implementers, interpreters, generators of alternatives, but not creators of policy (Heclo, 1974; Kingdon, 1995). This dichotomy between politics and administration or between policy-making and policy implementation has frequently been challenged from both a theoretical and practical perspective.¹⁴ Pressman & Wildavsky (1984) observe that, “implementation should not be divorced from policy. There is no point in having good ideas if they cannot be carried out” (p. 143). A new vision emerged of bureaucrats or public administrators as “agents of the body politic,” or those given the responsibility for the achievement of pursuit of public interest (Tussman, 1960). Walmsley (1990) saw public administration as consciously derived from the concept of “agency perspective”—that is, that “agencies are repositories of, and their staffs trustees, of specialized knowledge, historical experience, time-tested wisdom, and most importantly, some degree of consensus as to the public interest relative to a particular societal function” (p. 33).

Heclo (1974), in his study of the development of modern social policies in Britain and Sweden, noted that it was not just a peculiarly American phenomenon to find administrators promoting and organizing the political basis of a policy and that an activist

¹⁴ Numerous scholars such as Friederich (1940), Appleby (1952), Aberbach (1981), and Lipsky (1980) examined how policy is made by the people who implement it, and how bureaucrats effectively function as policy makers, not just policy implementers. It was Long (1965) who noted that “It is clear that the American system of politics does not generate enough power at any focal point of leadership to provide the conditions for an even partially successful divorce of politics from administration” (p. 16).

civil servant role was a pervasive phenomenon rather than the exception. “If policy is understood not simply as intended action but what actually occurs consequent to intentions, then the place of civil servants in the development of modern social policy has been crucial” (p. 301). Nakamura and Smallwood (1980) identified a continuum of linkages between policy makers and policy implementers, with “classical technocrats” at one extreme (that is, when policy makers delegate *technical* authority to implementers) and “bureaucratic entrepreneurship” (when implementers formulate policy goals and persuade policy makers to accept their goals) at the other.

Joseph Schumpeter, who compiled a history of entrepreneurship in his *History of Economic Development* (1934), defined the function of entrepreneurs, “to reform or revolutionize the pattern of production by exploiting an invention or, more generally, an untried technological possibility for producing a new commodity or producing an old one in a new way” (Schumpeter, 1976). Schumpeter viewed “political entrepreneurs” as functioning in ways analogous to their economic counterparts—that is, by shifting public resources towards a more optimal (Pareto-efficient) use and engaging in agenda setting and the strategic manipulation of incentives (Fowler, 1994). Kingdon (1995), who defines policy entrepreneurs as advocates for proposals or for the prominence of an idea, notes that they are not necessarily located in one location in the policy community, but may be in or out of governments, in elected or appointed positions, in interest groups or research organizations. “But their defining characteristic, much as in the case of the business entrepreneur, is their willingness to invest their resources—time, energy, reputation and sometimes money—in the hope of a future return. That return might come

to them in the form of policies for which they approve, satisfaction from participation, or even personal aggrandizement in the form of job security or career promotion” (pp. 122-123). Fowler (1994), similarly, defines a political entrepreneur as follows: “we might characterize political entrepreneurs as individuals who mobilize economic and human resources in order to alter existing policies, rules or institutions. Broadly speaking, they traffic in a variety of currencies—votes, money, group membership, volunteers—and they operate at all levels of government, within parties and interest groups, and at the grassroots” (p. 297).

Political entrepreneurs are sometimes viewed as individuals who find it in their personal interest to change institutional structures or to provide collective benefits to relevant groups (Hebert and Link, 1988; Hardin, 1982). Some are “policy groupies,” who simply like the game, being near or at the seat of power, and enjoying being part of the decision (Kingdon, 1995). Other forms of public sector entrepreneurs have been identified by Roberts and King (1996), such as “executive entrepreneurs” (those who hold appointive governmental positions), “policy entrepreneurs” (those who do their work without holding formal positions in government), and “bureaucratic entrepreneurs” (those who work in government in non-leadership positions). Lewis (1980), in his study of the organizational lives of such figures as Admiral Hyman Rickover, J. Edgar Hoover, and Robert Moses, characterizes the “public entrepreneur,” as a person who exercises leadership and alters significantly the existing pattern of allocation of scarce public resources and who is able to exploit contradictory mixes of organizational and political values. He notes that, “The public entrepreneur, somewhere during his career, comes to

understand that *the large, complex public organization is the most powerful instrument for social, political and economic change in the political universe*" [author's italics] (p. 238).

Within this "typology" of entrepreneurs in the public sector, "bureaucratic entrepreneurs" can perhaps be distinguished as skillful executives, rather than as charismatic leaders. Levin and Sanger (1994) define the characteristics of successful bureaucratic entrepreneurs as follows: "They are driven by a mission, they behave opportunistically in the face of rapidly changing environmental circumstances, they have a bias towards action, they are willing to take risks, and they employ a strategy of intentionally underestimating the difficulty in achieving their objectives" (p. 150). They exercise in strategies such as "creative subversion" by circumventing formal rules and regulations; "bootlegging" or garnering disproportionate amounts of research and development time as well as funds from other projects in order to engage in the experimentation required for innovative product development; and "working underground" to disguise how long the innovation process is occurring. Doig and Hargrove (1987) note that fertile ground for entrepreneurship can be found in a governmental system characterized by fragmentation and overlap as it yields opportunities for policy experimentation and for initiative in building political coalitions. Such opportunities are not readily available in tightly run government systems. Public entrepreneurs also emerge because of the need to reduce uncertainty in large, complex organizations and to mobilize both resources and political support (Lewis, 1980). The particular "looseness" in governance structures and decision-making in education—

described at length earlier in this chapter—may be particularly conducive for entrepreneurship. Career bureaucrats who are part of what Wirt and Kirst (1997) term the “professional-bureaucratic complex” and “intergovernmental lobby” often exert significant influence in the early stages of educational policy. This was particularly evident in the mid-1980s surge of state-based education reform. Mazzoni (1995) notes that, “In some states, these ‘bureaucrats’ took advantage of the prominence of school reform to put forth their preferred solutions and maneuver them into enactments” (p. 59).

Roberts and King (1996) in their study of the adoption of public school choice in Minnesota define the twin processes of entrepreneurship and innovation as integral components of second order change or “radical change by design.” “Entrepreneurship brings forth a new idea, attracts interests, and mobilizes resources to support it. Innovation moves the new idea through the constraints of the policy process” (p. xii). The entrepreneurial process needs individuals who employ a systems perspective to diagnose policy problems and who have sufficient cognitive complexity to generate creative solutions to complex, messy social issues. As issues grow more complex, constituencies more diverse, and change more discontinuous and radical, Roberts and King speculate that the age of the heroic or individual entrepreneur is over, and that the age of collective entrepreneurship or “team entrepreneurship” is emerging. They note that team entrepreneurship can involve individual entrepreneurs, but need not do so. The team can consist of a collection of specialists, representing different functional areas of the policy process, such as policy intellectuals, policy advocates, policy champions, policy administrators and policy evaluators—all of whom can combine their efforts and work

together to produce an innovation. Although Roberts and King acknowledge that an entrepreneurial identity consists of a combination of personality, values, motivation and skills, they attribute much of public entrepreneurship as *learned behavior*. “We believe that a person can learn to behave entrepreneurially even without an entrepreneurial identity, just as one can learn to behave more creatively even without strong natural abilities” (p. 158). Hebert and Link (1988), on the other hand, disagree, saying that the entrepreneur is a person, not a team, committee or organization.

This Connecticut case study, to be described at length in the next two chapters, illustrates two principle dimensions of bureaucratic entrepreneurship previously described—that is, how state agency personnel or “implementers” devised successful strategies to persuade policy makers to accept their goals of higher standards for the teaching profession, as well as how they engaged in “creative subversion” and risk-taking to pursue innovative research and development in the area of teacher performance assessments. By assembling within the agency a team of diverse individuals with different backgrounds who were able to bring varied talents and perspectives into the creative process, an innovative organization (Zaltman, Duncan and Holbek; 1993) was created. Gray (1994) notes in her studies of state-level policy innovations that two important factors are crucial—the emergence of “policy windows” and appearance of policy entrepreneurs. Those states with slack resources such as size or wealth coupled with a political culture that values change and capable legislators and bureaucrats are often the first to adopt innovations. As will be described in the next two chapters, the availability of slack resources (in the case of Connecticut, a large budget surplus in the mid-1980s), the

presence of individuals who functioned as bureaucratic entrepreneurs, and the creation of a climate within the agency conducive to innovation, learning and group problem-solving helped transform the Connecticut State Department of Education into a policy laboratory that has developed and sustained policy innovations for more than a decade.

CHAPTER 4

COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION REFORM IN CONNECTICUT: AN IN-DEPTH EXAMINATION OF TWO POLICY-MAKING MODELS

The chapter will examine two state-level comprehensive education reform initiatives in Connecticut: the first being a successful, bureaucratically-driven effort that culminated in the Education Enhancement Act (EEA) of 1986, and the second, a largely unsuccessful reform effort, launched by the business community in the early 1990s through the Commission on Educational Excellence in Connecticut (CEEC), which failed to lead to the enactment of comprehensive reform legislative before disbanding. These two reform initiatives are also illustrative of the two competing models of policy-making as described in Chapter Three. The EEA was a product of a policy-making process in which persuasion and learning were integral and in which ideas were incubated over time. It was also an example of "subsystem politics," in which "interest, specialization and access coalesce in the legislative subsystem to enable a small and stable group of committee-based lawmakers, agency bureaucrats, and established group representatives to dominate the institutional agenda and direct policy-making processes in an issue domain" (Mazzoni, 1991, p. 117). In contrast, the CEEC reflected a self-interest model of policy-making in which competing interest groups primarily outside of the education community pressed for the adoption of their own political agendas, with no one group or individual providing the leadership or vision necessary to build coalitions or to persuade legislators and the public that there was a need for another reform of Connecticut's education system. The CEEC drama was played out in an arena of "macro politics," in which policy-making is much

more visible, accessible, ideological and contentious. “The frontstage replaces the backstage deal; the evocative politics of the theater replaces the pragmatic politics of the meeting room” (Mazzoni, 1991, p. 117). Studying the differences between these two comprehensive state-level reform initiatives provides insights into the importance of leadership and persuasion in the political process, how time is necessary for the incubation of new ideas and policies, and how involvement of SDE staff in strategizing and crafting a policy agenda can facilitate the building of coalitions among competing interest groups.

This chapter will first examine the growth in the role and influence of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) beginning in the mid-1970s, including how local/state relationships changed and how technical and organizational capacity was created within the agency. These changes were important factors leading to a series of initiatives undertaken by CSDE staff to lay the groundwork for building political support for the salary and teacher standards provisions of the Education Enhancement Act of 1986. This process will be described in detail, including what led to a remarkable confluence of factors resulting in the passage of a major education reform initiative, whose statutory and regulatory provisions as well as programs remain in place more than a decade later. In contrast to this bureaucratically-driven education reform initiative, the business-led CEEC reform effort will then be examined, and reasons suggested for its shortcomings.¹

¹ There has been some debate whether the CEEC reform agenda should be deemed a “failure” in the long-term, as a number of its recommendations (such as early childhood programs, education technology initiatives, and changes to teacher tenure laws) were subsequently enacted as individual pieces of legislation over the next several years. However, the CEEC was unsuccessful to the degree it failed to produce a comprehensive “outcomes-based” reform package and the coalition of business interests that comprised much of its membership disbanded shortly thereafter.

The Growth in the Role and Influence
of the Connecticut State Department of Education

The Education Enhancement Act of 1986 has been described as the culmination of a series of initiatives undertaken by CSDE staff as early as the mid-1970s, that focused on the promotion of educational equity and excellence. A former CSDE legislative liaison commented, "A track record was established—people were looking to the Department to improve education."

Many of these initiatives began during the tenure of Mark Shedd, Connecticut Commissioner of Education from 1974 to 1983. He was a commissioner described by most who knew him as a "visionary." He took a passive and decentralized state education bureaucracy and transformed it into an activist agency that aggressively promoted a strong state role in formulating educational policy. Steve Tracy, who served as a special assistant to Commissioner Shedd, commented that, "He saw the state as an engine of equity and providing students with opportunities. Therefore, you have to enhance the capacity of the state agency to build the argument—you have to have data to argue not only for money, but for a more equitable distribution of resources. The state department of education had to be the repository of data on educational equity.... This is important with respect to the success of the EEA. By 1986, the state had developed the capacity to speak with knowledge about resources and the capacities of local districts."

The impetus for altering the relationship between the state and local districts in funding public education and increasing the influence of the CSDE in establishing state-

wide K-12 educational policy was the 1974 landmark lawsuit *Horton v. Meskill*, which challenged the constitutionality of the state education aid formula then in effect. On December 25, 1974, the Superior Court ruled that the present system did not comply with two sections of the state constitution: Section 20 of Article First (the equal protection clause which says, “No person shall be denied the equal protection of the law nor be subjected to segregation or discrimination in the exercise or enjoyment of his civil or political rights because of religion, race, color, ancestry or national origin.”) and Section 1 of Article Eighth (the education provision that states, “There shall always be free public elementary and secondary schools in the state. The general assembly shall implement this principal by appropriate legislation”).

In an attempt to preempt judicial intervention, the Connecticut General Assembly established in late 1973 the Commission to Study School Finance and Equal Educational Opportunity. In its final report released in January, 1975, the Commission recommended that the state establish a minimum property tax base per pupil for the support of public schools (a statewide guaranteed tax base) in all towns. Other recommendations included establishing a program of urban education aid to help meet the greater needs and costs for providing educational services in the state’s largest cities, increasing state funding for programs educating disadvantaged children, and having the state assume a greater share of the cost of special education programs. In addition, the Committee recommended, “That the State Department of Education’s capabilities for data collection and analysis be greatly strengthened to facilitate implementation of these recommendations” (Governor’s Commission on Quality and Integrated Education, 1975, p. ii).

On April 19, 1977, the Connecticut Supreme Court upheld the Superior Court decision that the state's funding system violated the equal protection and education provisions of the state constitution and that, "[there] is a direct relationship between per pupil expenditures and the breadth and quality of educational programs" (*Horton v. Meskill*). The court, however, refrained from judicial intervention, but retained its legal jurisdiction, thereby allowing the General Assembly time to take responsible legislative action before imposing a court-mandated course of action. In the fall of 1977, the State Board of Education appointed the Connecticut School Finance Advisory Panel, with State Senator Richard F. Schneller as its chair, to develop a comprehensive, long-range plan to reform school funding practices and to provide equal educational opportunity in compliance with the Connecticut State Supreme Court's decision in *Horton v. Meskill*. In addition to its extensive fiscal recommendations, a comprehensive series of educational recommendations was made to improve the ability of the state and local school districts to engage in planning, implementation and evaluation of school programs. These recommendations were key and precedent-setting, as they sent the message that dollars alone were insufficient to remedy inequities in educational opportunity, but that standards, resources, and capacity at the local school district level were equally necessary. As a consequence, the State Board of Education was to report annually on the "true condition of education," including sources and allocation of resources, numbers and characteristics of students and professional staff, program offerings, and student accomplishments. In addition, the State Board was to publish models for the effective staffing of schools and, in conjunction with the Board of Higher Education and local school districts, develop and

engage in “comprehensive, continuous and systematic programs of personnel development and leadership training” (Connecticut State Board of Education and Connecticut School Finance Advisory Committee, 1979, p. 6). In January, 1979, the Board adopted the Panel’s report, and the General Assembly enacted the Educational Equity Plan (Public Act 79-128), which established a new education funding system based upon the guaranteed minimum property tax base (GTB) and minimum expenditure requirements.²

The overarching significance of the *Horton v. Meskill* lawsuit was that the state supreme court affirmed that education was a state function, and that, although power is delegated to local boards, there are state constitutional responsibilities and standards that have to be met, and that equal educational opportunity requires a set of standards, both programmatic and financial. A former deputy commissioner summed it up as, “It was the Red Sea parting in terms of the State Board of Education being able to cross [it], and the question was how they were going to pursue that.” Whereas the policy influence of the state prior to the mid-1970s was limited to administering big federal categorical grant programs, the policy focus shifted into core areas of local practice. “The day of the subject matter consultant sitting by the phone waiting for it to ring are over....Now there is an agenda on the part of the state to drive instruction, to monitor finance....There is an accountability framework that has been initiated,” commented one former CSDE consultant.

² In 1985, the plaintiffs sought relief from the courts again (*Horton v. Meskill III*), by arguing that the legislature had delayed implementation of P.A. 79-128. The plaintiffs did not pursue the case further after the General Assembly passed the Education Enhancement Act of 1986, which included—in addition to its salary enhancement and teacher standards provisions—provisions to increase state education funding levels to districts and to amend school finance formulas again.

Connecticut was not unique in facing school finance litigation or challenges to racial desegregation in its schools. Nonetheless, as one former education department staff member who is currently an urban superintendent commented, “No other Commissioner up to that time had had the impact [that] Dr. Shedd [had]. He was responding—there is no question about that—to a suit that was brought....But how he responded shaped...the course of policy in Connecticut since. That is the foundation [for] the change in character of the state department and its role in state education policy-making....I didn’t recognize the significance of it at the time...In fact, I had to get into a local system to fully appreciate it. Seventy-five percent of the funding [for urban districts] comes from the state—that’s the work of Mark Shedd.”

In order to argue not only for more money but for a more equitable distribution of resources, the state needed to become a repository of data on the distribution of educational resources and performance of students. Mark Shedd realized the value of research and evaluation, and, as a consequence, recruited staff with expertise in research, testing and evaluation. He introduced a ninth grade proficiency test (the Educational Evaluation and Remedial Assistance [EERA] Program) in 1980, for purposes of identifying low-performing students in need of remedial help to master the basic skills of mathematics, writing and reading, and reported results by district and statewide. In addition, Connecticut became the second state, after Minnesota, to administer the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) items to samples of students in grades 4, 8 and 11 in mathematics, reading, science, social studies, career education, art and music, as well as develop its own innovative student assessments (through the Connecticut

Assessment of Education Progress or CAEP Program). Shedd also recognized the importance of bringing technology into the CSDE to track expenditures and performance, as well as disparities in spending, tax rates and teacher salaries among wealthy, average and poor school districts. Shedd's organization of the Department into separate budget, research and evaluation, and curriculum bureaus played an important role in consolidating talent and building the agency's technical capacity.

Recruitment of new agency personnel was also one of Shedd's key strategies. He recruited individuals from prominent universities—Harvard, Yale and Stanford—to be on his staff. Not always former educators, these individuals had backgrounds and training in law, public policy, measurement, or social science research. Current Commissioner of Education Theodore Sergi, who served as Shedd's deputy commissioner, remarked that, “He [Shedd] had the ability to find a group of younger people who were willing to get involved in policy. There are not a lot of places to deal with policy. Some people think that the state department is a place for superintendents to retire in, but that's not been the case in Connecticut since 1974 ... if there is a word that represents what we've been doing, it's *capacity*—the creation of capacity.”

The changes in policy that occurred with the changes in the funding for public education in Connecticut, coupled with the growth in organizational capacity, resulted in growth in the agency's policy influence. “This resulted in the receptivity of the legislature to the ideas coming from the Department,” noted Scott Brohinsky, the Department's legislative liaison during the 1980s.

The “Fomenting of Ideas”: the Process of Building Political Support
for the Education Enhancement Act of 1986

In regards to the circumstances and events leading to the passage of the Education Enhancement Act, Commissioner of Education Theodore Sergi recently remarked that, “It was very circumstantial—things occur after some period of ‘fomenting.’ Also, what you’re in competition with at that time. To give credit to an initiative, you have to go back to the past.” It is by examining the events of the decade preceding the EEA that it also becomes apparent that the seeds were sown for the subsequent emergence of bureaucratic entrepreneurship within the agency.

A series of activities began in the late 1970s and early 1980s designed to deal with the problems of attracting and retaining the best people into the teaching profession, enhancing the process by which teachers became certified, raising standards for the approval of teacher preparation programs, and improving how teacher competency was assessed. Shedd was described as having a “finger in the wind” when it came to the emerging interest in issues around the quality of teachers. He was involved in discussions nationally about attracting and retaining quality teachers into the profession. In the late 1970s, he convened a committee representing forty-five professional groups to examine issues of teacher professional development. In April, 1981, the Committee presented its report: “25 Recommendations to Improve Professional Competence.” Its proposals covered four major areas: (1) attracting qualified candidates into the profession, (2) preparing prospective professionals, (3) inducting new professionals, and (4) continuing professional development of experienced professionals. During 1982 and 1983, just prior

to the release of *A Nation at Risk*, this large committee was spun off into five different committees to make more specific recommendations: (1) A Distinguished Citizens Task Force on Quality Teaching to make recommendations on how quality teachers might be attracted to and retained in Connecticut schools, (2) the Certification Advisory Council, to update and strengthen teacher certification regulations, (3) the Committee on the Revision of Procedures and Standards for Program Approval, whose charge was to improve teacher preparation programs, (4) a subgroup of the original Professional Development Committee to continue its work in addressing teacher professional development, and (5) a Committee to address teacher testing and standards issues.

The Distinguished Citizens Task Force,³ chaired by Stephen J. Trachtenberg, President of the University of Hartford, released its report in September, 1983, which contained twelve broad recommendations to ensure that qualified teachers were attracted to and remained in Connecticut classrooms. Unfortunately, no actions were taken as a result of the report. This was in part the result of a leadership vacuum in the agency which occurred between Mark Shedd's resignation in January, 1983, and Gerald N. Tirozzi's assuming the office of Commissioner of Education in July, 1983. In addition, the Distinguished Citizens Task Force had failed to address the monetary implications of its recommendations. Dorothy Goodwin, a former legislator and State Board of Education chairperson,⁴ commented, "it was really a disappointing commission, because it never

³ see Appendix B for a list of the members of the Distinguished Citizens Task Force.

⁴ Dorothy Goodwin also served on both the Distinguished Citizens Task Force on Quality Teaching as well as the subsequently formed Governor's Commission on Equity and Excellence in Education, the important policy committee that created the legislative agenda and political support for the passage of the EEA of 1986 (to be discussed further in this chapter).

[went] anywhere ... I suppose it was a necessary interim step.” The Task Force was, however, successful in raising the consciousness of the public about how low teacher salaries were. Ed Dorsett, who served on the Distinguished Citizens Task Force and was subsequently elected President of the Connecticut Education Association, commented, “[the report] was really positive for teachers—there was a lot of press in Connecticut about teacher salaries. My sense of what happened is that the people of Connecticut realized that teachers shouldn’t be painting or working at MacDonald’s.”

A series of fortuitous events began, which proved instrumental in pushing Connecticut’s teacher reform agenda forward. Gerald Tirozzi was appointed Commissioner on the same day as the release of *A Nation at Risk*. As the former Commissioner recalls, “It sent a clear message of the plight of education of America. It gave me a major window of opportunity to move.” In the opinions of numerous individuals, Mark Shedd had established the policy agenda for the future Education Enhancement Act, but Gerald Tirozzi took that agenda and ran with it. As one education consultant commented, “Mark Shedd handed Gerald Tirozzi more fodder for change on a silver platter than any other commissioner has handed his successor.” Another former CSDE staff member commented that, “I’m a firm believer that ideas are a dime a dozen.... You’ve got a guy [Tirozzi] here who took it and re-worked it. Tirozzi was able to take the ball and run with it. My hunch is—Tirozzi was more the man for it. Shedd was more a global thinker. Tirozzi would listen and learn.” A superintendent who was a former state education consultant at the CSDE at that time recollected, “... Gerry ran it more by committee. He himself, I don’t believe, came forward with those ideas. I

remember at the time, he'd say, 'pull together proposals, folks.' There was this huge think-tank initiative that occurred at the department at that time. It's probably the only time before or since where the people in the department had such opportunity to participate. That's significant."

Because of the previous work of agency staff in brainstorming policy initiatives and working with numerous committees of educators to build constituency support, Gerald Tirozzi was able to release within the first three months of his tenure as Commissioner, a major policy document, *Connecticut's Challenge: An Agenda for Educational Equity and Excellence* (Connecticut State Board of Education, 1984). This document clearly communicated the agency's stance that the key to the future success of Connecticut's schools was the raising of standards and expectations—for teachers as well as students. Among the key recommendations in this report were the following:

- stricter standards for high school graduation
- changes in teacher preparation programs and certification requirements
- better professional development for teachers
- lowered mandatory school age
- longer kindergarten classes
- establishment of a mastery test in the fourth, sixth and eighth grades
- improved remedial instruction
- upgraded programs in vocational and adult education
- requirements for local policies on homework and attendance

The report noted that, "Teachers and administrators need to know that the work they do is important and worthy of both respect and respectable salaries. Our school professionals must be competent and accountable for the job done. The state's educators must be models—not only of teaching, but of learning" (p. 2). Among the recommendations for

improving teaching was a call for the State Board of Education to ask the Governor to convene a citizens' commission to make specific recommendations concerning raising teachers' salaries and to examine appropriate funding sources.

By 1984, conditions seemed optimal for the passage of a statewide education reform package. All five of the essential preconditions for education reform identified by Guthrie and Koppich (1987),⁵ were present. After a prolonged recession, the Connecticut economy was growing and the state budget was in a surplus position (a rising economic base). The education initiatives of the Shedd administration, such as the introduction of a statewide ninth grade proficiency test in 1980 along with public reporting of results, represented steady, incremental progress in educational improvement (stable conditions preceding a major reform effort). The groundwork for a comprehensive education reform agenda and constituency support was laid by the work of the Distinguished Citizens Task Force and the various other committees of educators, business leaders, parents and other constituency groups convened to address issues of attracting and retaining quality teachers into the profession (precursor ideas and prospective proponents). The turnaround in the state's economy had produced labor shortages, prompting fears that there might also be an emerging labor market shortage of teachers. Furthermore, in Connecticut, as elsewhere, *A Nation at Risk* had drawn the public's attention to the pressing need for major education reform (a catalytic event).

⁵ As noted in chapter 3, the five preconditions are a rising economic base, stable conditions, a set of preconditions or precursor ideas, prospective proponents, and a catalytic event (Guthrie and Koppich, 1987).

More importantly, two additional factors were present in Connecticut: strong leadership and capacity within the state education agency. As a result of Mark Shedd's and Gerald Tirozzi's leadership and agency staff who had been empowered to come up with a plan to improve the quality of the state's teacher workforce, the CSDE already had a policy agenda on the table ready to go. Strong leadership and capacity within the agency were not only important in terms of creating a policy agenda, but also in creating the mechanisms to implement that agenda through the selection of policy instruments combining accountability with incentives and inducements. These strategies enabled Connecticut's education reform agenda to be sustained over the next decade.

In the political arena, however, things were more complex. The 1984 election had placed the General Assembly in the hands of the Republicans, whereas the Governor was a Democrat. Commissioner of Education Gerald Tirozzi, along with his Deputy Commissioner Lorraine Aronson, knew that broad-based political support had to be mobilized in order to put forth a successful legislative package. As noted in an important policy report, "a strong political tradition of local control of the schools exists in Connecticut. The operation of public schools has been delegated to local boards of education. Under this structure, the state encourages improvement without mandates....In certain instances, however, the state has found it necessary to assume responsibility for certain educational functions" (Governor's Commission on Equity and Excellence in Education, 1985, pp. 6-7). It was not surprising, then, that the Republican-controlled General Assembly as well as interest groups such as the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) wanted local districts to control how

additional state monies set aside for educational reform would be used, whereas the CSDE was pushing for a legislative agenda promoting equity and greater state control. As Theodore Sergi⁶, then a participant in Tirozzi's inner policy-making circle, recalls, "I distinctly remember a discussion that this was not going to happen by the education community—it needed the Governor's support." As a result, Commissioner Tirozzi asked Governor William O'Neill to convene a Commission with "heavy duty people to anoint the concept and provide us a base on which to build political support.... We needed to build an agenda and market it." Commissioner Tirozzi and the Governor's Chief of Staff, David McQuade, put together the list of persons to be appointed. On August 14, 1984, the Governor announced the formation of the Governor's Commission on Equity and Excellence in Education, consisting of 17 appointees⁷ representing public school and college educators, business people, legislators and other prominent citizens (see Appendix C for a list of Commission members). Its charge was to study the state's education system and, in the words of Governor O'Neill, to "'aid in the pursuit of equity and excellence in Connecticut public schools. This Commission will focus, more closely than ever before, on the people who have the most to do with the education of our children—our teachers...'" (Governor's Commission on Equity and Excellence in Education, 1985, p. 1). The Commission—co-chaired by Timothy J. Moynihan, a prominent Democratic lawmaker, and Dean E. Wolcott, a Division President at Aetna Life and Casualty—was

⁶ Theodore Sergi has served as Connecticut Commissioner of Education from 1994 to the present.

⁷ Of the 17 members of the Governor's Commission on Equity and Excellence in Education, eight were representatives of the business community or private sector, three were active members of General Assembly (including the two education committee chairpersons), four were former elected or appointed public officials, one was a teacher, and one the Commissioner of Education, Gerald N. Tirozzi.

convened in August of 1984. Timothy Moynihan, who had served on the Education Committee and was then minority leader of the House with close ties to Governor O'Neill, recalls, "When they approached me to co-chair it, there were howls of protest from the teachers' unions, as I had been identified as one who had been concerned with intrusion on the administrative issues in terms of their productivity, in terms of their preparation, the quality issue, raises for everybody without regard to performance...so they were not happy campers." Of the seventeen members of the Commission, the only teacher representative was a former National Teacher of the Year, who had no official ties to either of the two teachers' unions. A former state department of education official noted that teacher union representatives were deliberately left off the Commission for political reasons: "If we're talking millions of dollars, it [could not] be seen as an act of self-interest." Bob Eagan, who as then President of the Connecticut Education Association, commented, "we were very upset about that. We felt that it was critical to have a person from the unions represent us on the Commission." However, Eagan acknowledged that the union was invited to testify before the Commission on subjects they were discussing as well as pass out information from the union's own research of teacher issues. "I think that people on the Commission really extended themselves to have our voice heard," Eagan noted.

The Governor's Commission was successful in moving the political and policy agenda forward, unlike the Distinguished Citizens Task Force. Timothy Moynihan's characterized the differences between the two commissions as follows: "One is the presence of political will and political players and the other is the absence of political will

and political players.” Former Commissioner of Education Gerald Tirozzi similarly noted, “a Commission is successful to the degree to which a stamp of power is placed on it.” Among the differences that Tirozzi identified between the Task Force and the subsequent Governor’s Commission was, “[the task force] didn’t have a power structure behind it. If you have a seated governor who puts his imprimatur on it, it can only go somewhere...it puts public policy in the public arena. It was a brilliant move getting the governor on board.” What was also significant was that Commission members knew that money was on the table. On April 4, 1985, David McQuade, the Governor’s representative, came before the Commission to announce that the Governor was committing \$20 Million of the current state surplus to be set aside as a trust fund for educational excellence.⁸

The Commission’s agenda was carefully orchestrated by CSDE staff. As one CSDE staff consultant to the Governor’s Commission commented, “The staff does most of the work—you bring stuff to the committee to bounce around; they’d ask questions or ask for this or that—that’s my recollection of how it worked.” The Commission was presented the key recommendations from the Distinguished Citizens Task Force as well as recommendations from the Certification Advisory Council. CSDE staff made presentations on other related issues such as state teacher evaluation laws, data from a Connecticut teacher supply and demand study, proposals endorsed by the State Board related to teacher recognition, selection, working conditions and professional development.

⁸ Later, the Education Trust Fund grew to over \$300 million.

Art Wise, director of the RAND Center for the Study of the Teaching Profession, was hired as chief consultant to the project. Former Commissioner of Education Gerald Tirozzi commented about Dr. Wise, “[he] brought national issues to the table. He also brought outside credibility to the project.” Art Wise, recollects that, “What was going on at RAND was laying the groundwork for what has become a modest movement to professionalize teaching in the country....What I cannot tell you was how purposeful was the fact that they ended up hiring me versus other consultants that they considered hiring....By hiring me, they were buying into something, and whether they knew or not what they were getting, I don’t know.”

The report, *Teachers for Today and Tomorrow*, released in June 1985, was described as “... a policy report ... it set in motion the future legislative action.” Its key recommendations focused on *incentives* and *increased standards* for the state’s teachers. Specifically, it called for:

(1) *incentives* for teachers to enter and be retained in the profession through the establishment of:

- a minimum teachers’ salary
- a voluntary three-year state-funded incentive program to increase salaries for teachers at all levels
- local development grant funds for districts implementing career ladders
- differentiated staffing
- professional teacher evaluation programs
- teacher recognition programs
- an induction program for beginning teachers
- a teacher-in-residence program at institutions of higher education

(2) increased standards for teachers through:

- changes to certification requirements
- implementation of a five-year program for teacher education
- strengthening of local teacher evaluation processes
- state teacher assessment requirements

Bringing the Commission's recommendations forward to the legislature for consideration was helped considerably by the fact that five members of the Governor's Commission were past or present legislators, including former or present co-chairs of the education committee. Two individuals, Timothy Moynihan and Dorothy Goodwin (who served in the legislature until 1984 and was appointed chairperson of the State Board of Education in 1985), were cited in particular as playing major roles in building support for the Commission's recommendations in the Republican dominated legislature. CSDE staff played a major role in writing the proposed legislation—specifically, Deputy Commissioner Lorraine Aronson; Scott Brohinsky, the Department's legislative liaison; and Theodore Sergi, formerly Shedd's deputy commissioner and in the mid-1980s an influential behind-the-scenes advisor to Commissioner of Education Gerald Tirozzi.

The Republicans, however, had difficulty coming to consensus on a legislative proposal, partially over disagreement about issues of local control and partially due to personality clashes between the two co-chairs of the Education Committee, Adele Eads and Marilyn Roach. In the last four or five days of the session, a bi-partisan committee was formed, and a legislative package emerged. The vote in the House was overwhelmingly in favor of the proposal, but consensus failed to emerge in the Senate.

The bill went to the conference committee, but no agreement emerged and the session ended without any education reform legislation being enacted.

Key CSDE and executive branch personnel concluded that “we needed something to happen and so [we] decided that what was wanted was for the Governor to send every member of the General Assembly a letter.” Deputy Commissioner Lorraine Aronson drafted a letter for the Governor. She recalls, “David [McQuade] only edited one word—‘merit’ [was eliminated in referring to] teacher salaries.” The Governor’s letter and subsequent speech chastised legislators for their failure to come to consensus. He called the General Assembly immediately back into special session. The *Hartford Courant* called the Governor’s letter-writing initiative a “bombshell.”

A bi-partisan committee (among whose members were Timothy Moynihan, Marilyn Roach, and David McQuade) was formed to re-draft the legislation, and several influential CSDE staff members such as Lorraine Aronson and Scott Brohinsky participated in the discussions. A few compromises were made in the proposal, but, for the most part, the original legislation was left intact. On June 6, 1986, An Act Concerning Education Enhancement (Public Act 86-1) was passed overwhelmingly with only a handful of dissenting votes in the Republican-controlled House and Senate. Commissioner of Education Gerald Tirozzi noted that creating bipartisan support “was my proudest accomplishment.” The overwhelming consensus was that timing was everything: “We were also riding the national wave—the right timing—it was a function of seizing the day,” noted Tirozzi’s Deputy Commissioner, Lorraine Aronson. One legislator commented that, “You had a wonderful coincidence of a robust economy, a surplus

budget, advocacy from the business community, advocacy from teachers—it's hard to find who was going to say no in that equation. And then ... mostly driven by legislators and the Department of Education—a relatively minor text of standards improvement came across.” This last statement explains why most people associate the \$300 million EEA initiative with raising teacher salaries, not increasing standards. Nonetheless, a relatively small, but influential group, including agency bureaucrats, succeeded in creating the policy structures that would, in the future, raise expectations for the performance of the state's educators.

The provisions of the Education Enhancement Act increased standards for teachers primarily through changes to the teacher certification system. A three-tiered teacher certification system was implemented, providing for initial, provisional and professional certification. In addition, an alternative route to certification was created to widen the pool of qualified educators entering the profession. While serving under the new one-year initial certificate, beginning teachers were required to participate in a beginning teacher support and assessment program, in which successful completion of an assessment of classroom teaching performance was required for provisional certification.⁹ The lifetime “standard” teaching certificate was replaced with a five-year renewable “professional certificate,” reissuance of which was contingent upon completion of a program of continuing education.

⁹ It should be noted that the teacher assessment requirements associated with the beginning educator support and assessment program (later re-named the Beginning Educator Support and Training [BEST] Program) were implemented under separate legislation (Public Act 86-147: An Act Concerning the Phase-in of Testing for Prospective Teachers).

Almost immediately after the legislation passed, the Connecticut Education Association (CEA)¹⁰ filed a lawsuit challenging the replacement of the lifetime teaching certificate with a five-year renewable certificate on the basis that it eliminated a teacher's property right. The suit was later dismissed by State Supreme Court, but, as one union official commented, "the conventional wisdom was that the CEA went back on their word." Union support—particularly that of the CEA—for higher teacher salaries had been considered critical in pushing the EEA legislation forward. A former union leader commented that, "it was a political *quid pro quo*. We were getting our salaries enhanced, and at the same time the public believed the standards under which the teacher could enter the profession and remain in the profession would be upgraded." Ed Dorsett, President of the CEA from 1986 to 1988, recalled that, "The CEA did some fascinating things—like billboards by the highway that half the legislature would see as they drove in from the west. The CEA was very visible...masterful in its public relations work. I seem to recall one slogan, "Now is the time to raise teacher salaries." The Connecticut State Federation of Teachers (CSFT), under the leadership of George Springer, however, was bitterly opposed to a number of the teacher reform proposals, including the establishment of an alternate route to certification and increasing the length of the school day or school year for teachers. He recalls, "We opposed the bill—the CSFT opposed the bill. The CEA opposed the bill when they first heard it..." A former legislator commented about the

¹⁰ Connecticut teachers are represented by two teachers unions: the Connecticut Education Association (an affiliate of the National Education Association) and the Connecticut Federation of Educational and Municipal Employees (CFEME), an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, which primarily represents teachers in the state's large urban school districts. Prior to 1997, the CFEME was formerly known as the Connecticut State Federation of Teachers (CSFT).

teachers unions, “They never came to the table, they opposed it to the bitter end in the legislature....they fought every way in terms of improving quality—in most every way—in terms of enhancing benefits.” George Springer commented that, “For the most part, the CEA and CSFT were outside the door asking to be let in....I am under no illusions that we played a great part in shaping legislation, in shaping state policy....Our impact comes later after the bill is passed....We would negotiate how the money was distributed. We would go to that town—along with the CEA—to decide where there was negotiation, where there was not, and how it would be applied. We had more influence over that process than we had over the making of the law, the convincing of the legislator, the State Board or whatever.”

In fact, it was the subsequent teacher salary negotiations at the local level that created what Kevin Sullivan (a former executive assistant to Mark Shedd and a member of the Connecticut General Assembly since 1987) termed “a time bomb fiscally.”¹¹ Within five years of the passage of the Education Enhancement Act, average teacher salaries across the state increased by more than 62%: from \$29,437 in 1986 to \$47,823 in 1991 (Prowda, 1998). The problem for towns was that teacher salary increases were funded by surplus dollars placed in an education trust fund instead of by current state revenues for the first three years after the passage of the EEA. Once the state surplus dollars were depleted, Senator Sullivan observed, “it created a huge financial pressure at the school district level, it created a huge financial burden at the state-level. When the economy

¹¹ The escalation of the rise in teacher salaries in local districts was driven primarily by the binding arbitration laws then in effect that required settlement on the basis of “last best offers.”

turned down, both the public economy and the private economy, the consequences were an apparent state commitment with no funding stream.”

Teacher salaries continued increasing at levels well exceeding inflation as a result of three-year collective bargaining agreements while the Connecticut economy plunged into recession in the early 1990s, thereby creating a substantial backlash against education and teachers (a subject to be discussed at some length in the next section of this paper dealing with the aborted education reform attempts of the Commission on Educational Excellence in Connecticut [CEECE]). Nonetheless, the EEA is widely credited with increasing the quality of the pool of prospective teachers in Connecticut. One school superintendent notes that, as a result of the EEA, “The prospective teachers who come to us are very highly qualified, the competition is significant, it remains a buyer’s market. We’re getting some excellent, new young teachers which otherwise would not have happened.” Another former superintendent commented that “The EEA affected the pool of teacher applicants. By the late 1980s, there was a noticeable increase in the quality of the applicant pool. All of us [superintendents] felt that the higher salaries drew a more talented applicant pool. The key impact was the quality of the people who wanted to teach and our ability to hire them.” Arthur Wise, now President of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, credits the EEA’s unique focus on both teacher salary and standards provisions with enabling Connecticut to attract and screen teachers to a greater degree than most states. “I have little doubt that Connecticut has the best qualified teachers in the country—I have no data, but by analysis, I would deduce that. It is the northeast that overproduced teachers hugely, and it is a small state with

permeable borders, and it is an area that produced a high quality [higher] education.” A 1992 Connecticut State Board of Education report credited the EEA reform provisions related to increasing teacher salaries and standards with attracting more qualified applicants to teaching. The data cited were increases in the educational qualifications of new hires, as defined by such indicators as the percentage with master’s degrees or higher, graduation from colleges rated “very selective” or better in Barron’s Index of College Majors, and undergraduate grade point averages. Furthermore, Connecticut’s tests of essential skills and content knowledge were credited with preventing the least-skilled candidates from becoming certified teachers. *“Based on test-result data between 1988 and 1991, the two ‘gatekeeper’ exams are eliminating about one-third of the initial pool of those interested in a teaching career; individuals who, in the past, might have taught in Connecticut’s public schools”* [italics in original] (Connecticut State Board of Education, 1992).

A study of the events leading to the passage of the Education Enhancement Act is significant, as it illustrates how a confluence of factors—including a robust economy, national attention to and public support for education reform, strong advocates, and a well-articulated agenda ready for implementation—contributed to a significant and enduring state-based education reform package. It was a bureaucratically-driven reform effort, as it involved the active leadership, ideas, and involvement of state agency personnel. Lorraine Aronson, then Deputy Commissioner, noted that, “Moving large pieces of legislation requires a huge amount of political strategizing...nothing just happens...you need to know what you want to happen before it happens. You don’t go

into it in a haphazard manner.... You need to know what you want and to structure your strategy to get it. This was significantly different from the CEEC. You need strong leadership.” A former CSDE staff member observed that leadership and agency capacity were intertwined: “[Gerald Tirozzi’s] leadership was pulling all that together and facilitating it, managing it, and so forth, and deciding which proposals would constitute the agenda of the state department of education. So the influence of individuals was enormous at that time. There are people walking around today [who will never] know the influence they had.”

Furthermore, the time span from conception to implementation was nearly a ten year process—from the initial ideas put forth in the late 1970s to the implementation of the teacher standards provisions of the EEA, such as the beginning educator support and assessment program. As a senior manager in the agency commented, “For the public, the genesis of this was the [Governor’s] Commission. They did not realize what went on before....It was extremely well thought out by many people, but mostly people in the education profession, not the legislators....One of the reasons it persisted was how well and thoughtfully it was put together. It took years, but it stuck.”

The Commission on Educational Excellence in Connecticut: The Clash of Special Interests

The success of the Education Enhancement Act reform agenda contrasts sharply to the unsuccessful attempt at “results-driven” education reform in the early 1990s through the Commission on Educational Excellence for Connecticut (CEECE). Numerous people

have termed it, “The Commission from Hell.” The overwhelming consensus of its critics was that the Commission was too large and too diverse, composed of too many “single-agenda” people, and focused on an agenda that was too diffuse, as it addressed everything from racial isolation to teacher tenure.

The differences between the Governor’s Commission on Equity and Excellence whose recommendations led directly to the legislation culminating in the Education Enhancement Act of 1986 and the CEEC are revealing from the contrasting perspectives of the political and economic environment, leadership, the role of state education agency personnel, and public support for education reform.

The financial and political climate had shifted dramatically from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s. By 1991, the state was in the midst of a prolonged recession and the state budget deficit was projected to exceed a billion dollars. The Education Enhancement Trust Fund, which had funded the first three years of state support for the salary enhancement provisions of the EEA, had run dry. The State Board of Education’s ten-year goal established in January 1979 to increase state aid for local education to a level at least equal to local revenues (in other words, a 50-50 funding goal) was falling short, with the state revenue share at 35.6 percent as of the 1991-92 school year (Connecticut State Board of Education, 1993).¹² Local school districts were forced to raise property taxes to cover expenses the state no longer picked up. A recently released national report on teacher quality noted that, “many of the state’s 166 districts, particularly the small systems that dot the state, have come to view the high teacher salaries as a significant burden

¹² The percentage of educational revenues from the state had peaked at 42.1 percent in 1989.

rather than a source of pride” (Flax, 1997). Scott Brohinsky, the Department’s legislative liaison until 1990, commented that, “Along with the recession, there was a shift in political environment, including a shift to meaner politics.” A prominent legislator noted similarly that, “This was the beginning of a fairly significant backlash both against education and against teachers....An environment of cynicism, an environment of skepticism, an environment of hostility, and an environment of a sense of unfulfilled promises....Hard times do not bring out good feelings.”

Gerald N. Tirozzi had resigned as Commissioner of Education in 1991, and Vincent Ferrandino did not assume that office until August, 1992. Thus, the agency faced a leadership vacuum for over a year with two interim Commissioners. Additionally, the state had elected an independent governor,¹³ Lowell P. Weicker, Jr., who took office in January, 1991. Regarding the challenges he faced in working with an independent governor, Vincent Ferrandino commented, “every issue [Weicker] was trying to maneuver through the legislature, we had to find allies on the various issues. And the allies changed with the issues....The other side of the context was that the state income tax had recently passed. And obviously there was a lot of fallout over that, uproar within the state, big government stepping in—that kind of perception. So I think all those sort of impacted in some way or other the work of the Commission.”

¹³ Lowell P. Weicker, formerly a Republican Senator, failed to win the Republican nomination for Governor in 1990 and subsequently formed “A Connecticut Party” (ACP) for purposes of running as a gubernatorial candidate. Four year later, his lieutenant governor, Eunice Groark, ran for Governor under the ACP, but was defeated, and the party has since all but disappeared from the Connecticut political scene.

Three out of five of the essential preconditions identified by Guthrie and Koppich (1987) as essential to the success of a major education reform initiative, all of which were present in Connecticut in the mid-1980s, were noticeably absent in the early 1990s. As noted earlier, instead of a rising economic base, the state was in the midst of a deep recession. There were no catalytic events like the publication of *A Nation at Risk* to produce the “spark” which would ignite the change or galvanize public opinion around the need for significant education reform. Guthrie and Koppich (1987) note that “[the] education system may need a period of stability following a preceding reform effort in order to accept the challenge of another change” (p. 46). At the time the CEEC was formed, only six years had passed since the EEA was enacted. Former Commissioner of Education Vincent Ferrandino commented, “There wasn’t a groundswell of support from the general public to think about reform. One of the things I’ve learned about schooling in Connecticut, is that, while I think the general public in the rest of the country think that public schools are not performing as well as they should, by and large, individuals with students in schools in Connecticut feel their students are doing well, except for the cities. That’s particularly true in suburban communities.”

A set of precursor ideas and proponents for change proposals were, however, present. The precursor ideas were David Hornbeck’s Nine Principles of a Successful Education System¹⁴ (see Appendix D) or what was also called the “Kentucky approach”; and the proponents for the change proposals were prominent business leaders. The two factors, however, that were particularly crucial to the successful passage of the EEA

¹⁴ David Hornbeck, a former Maryland State Superintendent and then a lawyer with Hogan and Hartstone, was employed as a consultant to the Business Roundtable to develop their education public policy agenda.

reform legislation were missing—that is, strong leadership as well as the active engagement of state education agency staff in crafting a policy agenda.

Hornbeck's Nine Principles, which comprised a comprehensive "systemic" education reform package advocating a performance or outcome-based education system, had been adopted in their entirety by Kentucky as part of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990. In September, 1989, the Business Roundtable, consisting of some of the nation's largest corporations, committed to a ten-year effort to work with state policy makers and educators to restructure state education systems, and, one year later, adopted as the centerpiece of its national education reform agenda the Hornbeck plan.¹⁵ Robert D. Kennedy, Chairman and CEO of Union Carbide (with headquarters in Danbury, Connecticut) and a member of the National Business Roundtable, undertook the role of bringing the Hornbeck agenda to Connecticut "lock-stock-and-barrel" (as described by one participant on the CEEC). Kennedy convened a state business roundtable, called the Connecticut Business for Education Coalition, Inc. (CBEC) and Union Carbide provided staff support to both CBEC as well as to the subsequently formed Commission on Educational Excellence in Connecticut. The Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA) pushed to expand the membership of CBEC to include not only national companies whose headquarters were in Connecticut, but also companies that were large players just in Connecticut, such as People's Bank, Northeast Utilities, and Southern New England Telephone. In May, 1992, CBEC released its recommendations for education reform in its report, *From Vision to Reality: When Schools Work*,

¹⁵ The Business Roundtable agenda is described in its publication. *The Essential Components of a Successful Education System: Putting Policy into Practice* (December, 1992).

Connecticut Works. As expected, its vision of a successful school system incorporated the Nine Essential Principles, along with recommendations for a broad range of actions related to assessment and accountability, teacher staff development, school readiness, and technology.

In February of 1992, the Connecticut General Assembly passed “An Act Concerning Educational Excellence for Connecticut,” which established “a commission on educational excellence in Connecticut.” Its charge was to develop a plan for “improving education in Connecticut and a timetable for implementation of an outcome-based world-class education system.” The legislation, written largely by CBIA, a participating member of CBEC as well as a player acknowledged to have both technical and political expertise, prescribed the specific members and interest groups to be represented on the Commission on Educational Excellence in Connecticut (CEEC).

The CEEC was co-chaired by the Commissioner of Education, Vincent Ferrandino, and William Connolly, President of ABB Business Services, a Stamford-based company. The Commission’s 41 members (see Appendix E) had only two teacher representatives (both representing the state’s two major teacher unions) and one parent representative (President of the state parent teacher association). Other members included Lorraine Aronson, who had returned after serving as Weicker’s Deputy Budget Director to the CSDE as Deputy Commissioner of Education; Timothy Moynihan, the former chair of the Governor’s Commission on Educational Excellence and Democratic party head and now President of the Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce; Kevin Sullivan and Nancy Wyman, the two co-chairs of the Education Committee in the Connecticut General

Assembly; Eunice Groark, Lieutenant Governor; and four other members of the General Assembly. Most of its business representatives were former members of CBEC. A former State Board of Education member commented, “The appointment of the Commission [CEEC] was the alphabet soup—that was the difference [between the Governor’s Commission]. Where they came from and who they were was so completely different. The Governor’s Commission was a leadership group.” Another observer commented, “almost every single member [of the CEEC] was a representative of a special interest group—it was like taking every lobbyist—every educational lobbyist and...saying to each one of them you’re on this commission.”

The CEEC agenda covered a wide range of loosely related issues—including testing, academic standards, family services, pre-school education, classroom technology, school calendar, teacher training and certification, and teacher tenure. Kevin Sullivan, co-chair of the Education Committee at that time, subsequently commented, “The CEEC—if there’s any weakness which I’ll take full responsibility for—was its global reach....It attempted to do too much in an environment that was increasingly skeptical of education.” By establishing such a comprehensive, unfocused agenda, the CEEC made itself a target for criticism from just about every constituency group. In contrast, the EEA reform agenda was focused on improving education through enhancing the quality of the teacher workforce, a concept easily grasped by the public and which was then prominent as a national issue.

Numerous subcommittees were formulated to address different parts of the CEEC agenda, each of which operated independently and with no overall coordination. Thus,

there were significant procedural differences between the CEEC and the EEA, particularly with respect to providing direction for the committee work. As one education official commented, “It was not a question of too much or too little control—there was *no* control.” There was, for example, no internal group openly sharing ideas and creating some form of common vision to be put forth by the Commission. A former legislative liaison to the CSDE noted, “If you don’t have a clear sense of where you’re going, you won’t go anywhere.” In comparing the policy-making process leading to the EEA with that of the CEEC, a prominent legislator observed, “The decisions of the CEEC were made primarily by the Commissioner, some of the key players on the business side...but not in a kind of open, collegial way, not the kind of way that would get legislators involved.” In contrast, in the mid-1980s, “the operating format for decision-making... was that Schneller,¹⁶ the Commissioner, Sergi, [and] one or two other people would get together and decide what was going to happen at a meeting and then would orchestrate that piece. That guaranteed that it had roots on both sides of the street—administratively and legislatively. That process was not followed at CEEC, and I think as a consequence that there was much too much of an effort at consensus and much too much of an effort at management that was out of the Department, and that led to some early missteps, including the whole Hornbeck misstep.” This reference to the Hornbeck misstep suggests that a major problem with the CEEC agenda was that its highly regulatory approach to reform (which suited a state like Kentucky) ran entirely counter to the political culture of Connecticut, in which minimal state intervention and local control are highly prized.

¹⁶ Chair of the General Assembly’s Education Committee in 1985.

CSDE staff played a far lesser role with respect to crafting the agenda or building political support for CEEC as compared to the EEA initiative. One legislator was particularly critical of the agency's lesser role: "I think the Department has to take a ton of responsibility for being too hands off and I think...not seeing the political forest or the political trees upon which all of that effort ultimately came to crash." One agency staff member commented, "I don't think Vince [Ferrandino] saw it as 'our thing.' He never geared up to really staff it effectively. We didn't have in our back pockets a vision. We basically saw ourselves in this enterprise as 'staff,' not as 'driver.' In the 1980s, we were the driver, as well as the staff." Lorraine Aronson, who had served as Deputy Commissioner of Education under Gerald Tirozzi during the mid-1980s and who played a crucial role in building the political coalitions that led to the EEA legislation, returned as Deputy Commissioner under Vincent Ferrandino's administration. However, as one agency staff person explained, "Vince never empowered Lori Aronson in the same way Gerry did." Ferrandino, in fact, had a different vision of what the role of the state department of education should be. He commented that, "[w]hile we do have a policy responsibility, I don't think the Department should be viewed as the top-down kind of entity that some in the education community view it as being. We should be more 'user-friendly.'"

Commissioner of Education Vincent Ferrandino admitted that, in terms of his personal priorities and attention, school desegregation proposals took precedence over the CEEC agenda. Just as the CEEC was beginning its work, the legislature passed Public Act 93-263. This legislation, which required local communities to take part in a regional

planning effort to address educational quality and diversity, was in reaction to a lawsuit, *Sheff v. O'Neill*. Filed in 1989, the lawsuit which charged that, because of *de facto* segregation and economic isolation, the state had violated its constitutional mandate to provide a minimally adequate education to students in Hartford. The case went to trial in the Connecticut Superior Court in late 1992. On January 6, 1993, Governor Weicker devoted his State of the State Message to Connecticut to a call for the legislature to mandate that the state be divided into six educational regions, each responsible for developing a five year plan to reduce racial isolation in the region's schools. Weicker was clear in stating his concern about the implications of the *Sheff v. O'Neill* case if the state failed to address racial and economic isolation in Connecticut's schools: "If we fail to act, the courts, sooner or later, will do that which by election was entrusted to us." Thus, in the legislative session preceding the release of the CEEC's report, the Governor's office was preoccupied with dealing with the *Sheff* lawsuit. Several sources close to Governor Weicker commented that his chief education priority was the desegregation issues around *Sheff*, and that he did not see the CEEC's work as critical and had little interest in it. Vincent Ferrandino recalls, "I remember briefly Weicker a couple of times. His chief focus was the desegregation process. So I would go in and brief him where we stood. I told him several times that I wanted to speak to him about the activities of the Commission. On several occasions, his retort to me was, 'Which Commission are you talking about?'" In addition to the Governor's lack of attention to the Commission and his subsequent decision not to run for re-election, active involvement or support from other legislators on the CEEC waned in the face of other political priorities. One member

of the business community noted, "It was an election year—everyone was nervous about going back to the district with outcome-based proposals." Eunice Groark, then Lieutenant Governor and a very influential member of the Commission, announced she was running for Governor. Nancy Wyman, co-chair of the education committee, announced her decision to run for state comptroller. Furthermore, Vincent Ferrandino resigned as Commissioner. One member of the business community commented, "When it came time to get the legislation on board, we thought we were out there alone."

The demise of the CEEC's proposals have been attributed to a number of forces, including well-organized interest groups opposing standards-based reforms, opposition by the two teachers unions, a lack of leadership, and fears over the costliness of the Commission's proposals. Blame has most frequently been laid at the door of a grassroots, right-wing "anti-outcome based education" group, Save Our Schools (SOS), founded by Kay Wall, an outspoken former business woman and president of the parent-teacher association in Greenwich, Connecticut. SOS was part of a national network of small, but well-organized traditional Christian and conservative groups. As noted by Massell, Kirst and Hoppe (1997), "These were not the only groups criticizing or opposing standards-based reform, but they were the most vocal and influential. These groups rallied against Outcomes-based Education (OBE) standards, and performance-based assessment, often perceiving them to be both extensions of government influence and vehicles for liberal philosophies" (p. 6). As one outsider observer commented, "SOS picked up on the vague public disenchantment with public schools in general....They tapped into this real frustration—uneasiness—about the public schools and were able to use that kind of fear to

scuttle this.” Robert Frahm, a columnist for the *Hartford Courant*, described the reasons for the collapse of the CEEC agenda as more complex than just the SOS group’s opposition. “Teachers abandoned it, and politicians watered it down. Still, the surprising rise of the Save Our Schools (SOS) group was a measure of the gulf between the reformers and the public especially those who mattered most—the parents of school children. In the end, the failure to connect with parents was fatal” (Frahm, 1994).

There is no question that the teachers unions exerted a powerful influence to defeat the proposed legislation. Unlike in the mid-1980s, there was no “carrot” (like enhanced salaries) to offer the unions to counteract the “stick” of holding educators more accountable. The unions’ strong opposition centered on those parts of the reform agenda related to changing teacher tenure laws and enhancing standards for the certification of veteran teachers. In a December 19, 1993 letter to members of the CEEC, the Connecticut Education Association voiced its opposition to proposals to increase standards for teacher licensing and evaluation for both beginning and veteran teachers through the use of teaching portfolios that connected student performance to teaching performance as well as changing tenure and fair dismissal laws. Bob Eagan, former President of the CEA, commented, “I think had that issue [teacher tenure] never been raised at the table, I think we would have looked at the passage of some form of legislation coming from the Commission. But once you place on the table the most politically volatile argument of all, you destroyed everything.” In former Commissioner of Education Vincent Ferrandino’s opinion, the unions saw teacher tenure as a non-issue, that it did not have anything to do with the question of improving the quality of education

in the state. “The unions stood up fairly strongly. I think [Union Carbide President and CEO] Kennedy had a belief that he could sway the union in this direction, but it did not happen. When critical issues that came up had impact on the union, they resisted any change at all.”

Legislators, already skittish about the upcoming elections, were inundated with calls from both anti-OBE groups and teachers opposing changes to the tenure laws. Former CEA President Robert Eagan commented that, once the issue of teacher tenure was raised again, “on top of the Kay Wall stuff, it spelled destruction.... People painted us as political allies—face it, she used us, we used her.” As one former school superintendent in Fairfield County observed, “That ‘Save our Schools’ was a strange group was reflected in the fact that the anti-outcomes based groups joined with the teachers groups to make sure the legislation was not passed. The CEEC went too far, so it crashed.... The 1986 law, in contrast, had a big sweetener: the push for higher teacher salaries.”

The absence of money to either provide a “sweetener” to secure union support or to fund any of the CEEC’s major recommendations was also a significant factor in the legislation’s demise. A member of one of the CEEC’s subcommittees commented about the members of the CEEC who were legislators, “I think most of the politicians that were there were afraid that they wouldn’t be able to come up with money... they were very nervous about what this would mean in terms of taxes.”

Perhaps the most significant reason for the failure of the CEEC reform proposals was not just the presence of powerful interests serving as “veto groups,” but the absence

of policy advocates to shape understandings of the policy issues and alternatives and to shift beliefs and values. Timothy Moynihan, who served on both the Governor's Commission in 1985 and the CEEC in 1994, commented, "It's fairly simple. You've got to have some advocates. And, in this kind of deal, you have to put together a bi-partisan coalition of people with credibility and have the executive branch engaged. And that's what we did in '85 and '86, and that's what wasn't able to be done in 1994. It's not brain surgery." Leadership and policy advocacy was missing from the business community and the education community. An outside observer commented about the co-chairs of the CEEC, Commissioner of Education Vincent Ferrandino and William Connolly, "I thought neither of them exhibited real leadership in terms of getting the group going or narrowing the agenda. There wasn't a strong sense this was Vince Ferrandino's idea. He did not champion this as openly or publicly as you would expect a Commissioner to do, but he didn't originate it....In terms of public visibility or making forceful statements, I don't think either one did."

Policy advocacy and leadership was especially needed because the CEEC became an arena for the collision in the world of ideas between the educators and the business community. Kevin Sullivan, then co-chair of the Education Committee, noted, "People not being able to talk with one another—it was different worlds colliding...because they were not talking about things that get at the heart of what it means to be a business person or at the heart of what it means to be a teacher. 'I know about management...if you just had better management of the schools'....'I know what it means to teach...you don't know what it means...I know best, you just stay out of it.'"

Daria Plummer, then a

prominent union activist and now President of the CEA, while acknowledging the importance of educators entering into partnerships with business, criticized the adversarial approach of the CEEC: “It was like saying to somebody, ‘you’re fat! You’re going to die if you don’t lose weight, so here’s the diet you have to follow.’ It wasn’t, ‘I want to build a bond with you, have you understand what the needs are from our perspective, how we can work together.’ It was talk down, it was that infamous pyramid, it was the hierarchy, the patriarchal point of view again.” Even the business community lacked consensus. Then CEA President Bob Eagan observed that the leadership of the CEEC resided with the large corporate community, not with the small business interests represented by the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. He commented, “I believe there was friction among those two groups—in their worlds. But I think what happened was that [Robert D.] Kennedy became very impatient—he’s a corporate person: ‘I said it and it will happen.’”

There was also a collision of ideas in terms of the fundamental issues of societal values and equity that were raised in connection with the fundamental premises behind the governing assumptions of the Hornbeck model.¹⁷ A school administrator who sat on the teaching and learning subcommittee observed that, “we were really hitting a lot of nerves in the CEEC work. We were talking about equity, real application of learning. You start

¹⁷ Number One of the Nine Essential Components of a Successful Education System is a series of assumptions:

- *Every student can learn at significantly higher levels;*
- *Every student can be taught successfully;*
- *Higher expectations for every student are reflected in curriculum content, though instructional strategies may vary; and*
- *Every student and every preschool child needs an advocate—preferably a parent.*

talking about that and people start getting afraid. It's too risky, they don't know if they can to it. Quite honestly, the equity issues—there's a lot of unspoken philosophies. They say out loud, 'kids should' and then, 'you can't do it with them, they don't measure up, they don't have the right background.'...I don't know if [the CEEC] had any advocate there who had a vision and a leadership skill to...push through the stone walls that were forming." It was, in fact, the controversy that surrounded the language used in the CEEC report that enabled the SOS group to rally opposition to its recommendations. Kay Wall characterized "outcomes-based education" (OBE) as forcing mediocrity on children, providing less emphasis on basic skills and shunning the use of phonics in reading instruction. Furthermore, Wall and others alleged that OBE would open the door for schools to meddle in personal and family values. The OBE proposals of the CEEC report may also have served as a scapegoat for the fears of the public that the legislatively mandated regional and local plans for Quality and Integrated Education would result in proposals for busing. In fact, the final report linked the work of the CEEC to that of the regional planning process: "Many of the Commission's recommendations can become useful ingredients in Connecticut's regional planning process for Quality and Integrated Education, and so the Commission supports and endorses these efforts as well" (Commission on Educational Excellence, 1994, p. ix).

Frahm (1994) notes that, "Whatever the motivation, the campaign perplexed commission members. They tried to distance themselves from the controversy, even dropping any reference to 'outcomes' from the original draft of the reform plan and substituting 'results.' They also accused Wall and others of spreading misinformation"

(p. 158). As former Commissioner of Education Gerald N. Tirozzi noted, “The legislature capitulated to a small but vocal group who distorted what was said.” A representative on one of the CEEC’s working groups observed that, because the meaning of language as well as the agenda of the CEEC were unclear and leadership was conspicuously absent, “The whole initiative was vulnerable [to derailing by] the populist movement led by Kay Wall...because there was no coalition to stand against that.” Despite the business community spending hundreds of thousands of dollars lobbying for the bill, politicians, under pressure from SOS members, began watering down the bill. “In the eyes of many educators, the debate lapsed into the absurd. At one point, lawmakers, influenced by the argument that the education bureaucracy was attempting to intrude on family values, proposed that a panel of legislators screen all questions on the statewide mastery test—a well-established exam that had been given for nine years” (Frahm, 1994, p. 158). State education agency personnel became increasingly nervous about the final legislative package. Lorraine Aronson admitted, “In the end, we were...actively aborting the initiative. I told Vince [Ferrandino] that this was worse than nothing—very high risk with limited returns.”

The defeat of the CEEC resulted in a scaling back of any centralized, concerted efforts to reform education by the corporate community in the mid-1990s. The Connecticut Business for Education Coalition (CBEC), which initiated the formation and agenda of the CEEC, disbanded in 1995, “...after concluding that education reform was a low priority for the newly elected governor and the legislature” (Flax, 1997, p. 84). Timothy Moynihan, President of the Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce, had warned

the business community that “they were in for a ten year game. It wasn’t a one or two year process....The prime difficulty we have is keeping people engaged—the same people over time, because the private sector loses patience if things don’t happen in a year or two.” Lauren Kaufman Weisberg, Vice President of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association, noted in retrospect, “We’re CBIA, and we’re in it for the long haul....actually, if you went back to the CBEC agenda and back to what they were trying to accomplish, I think 99 percent of it is currently in statute. We have just been more patient and been willing to look at more strategies and not just say it’s all or nothing. We got it—it’s there now.”

A number of important observations about the importance of leadership and persuasion in formulating public policies emerge when contrasting the successful education reform initiatives of the mid-1980s and the unsuccessful business community-led initiatives of the early 1990s.

Time is needed for what Commissioner of Education Theodore Sergi calls the “fomenting” of ideas. If public policies are conceptualized in the same manner as belief systems, then it takes time to build policy coalitions organized around common beliefs (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993). The EEA was the culmination of years of laying the groundwork in terms of ideas and political support for the importance of enhancing the teaching profession as a cornerstone of improving student achievement. As former Commissioner Gerald N. Tirozzi commented, “we spent about a year out there with the public. The idea was to communicate...we went from living rooms to meeting rooms.” In contrast, the CEEC tried to put forward an overly ambitious, not very well conceived

agenda in a little over a year. As one individual close to the CEEC's work commented, "The CEOs had to be out there endorsing something they didn't understand....It was too much driven by the national agenda." Furthermore, the public, while vaguely disenchanted about public schools, did not feel that their schools were a huge failure, and, as a result, the SOS group was able to appeal to the concerns of middle-of-the-road parents and those skeptical of government in general that the CEEC plan was a top-down bureaucratic intrusion into their local schools.

The presence of *leadership* was a key factor in the success of the EEA reforms and its absence a key factor in the demise of the CEEC. In the mid-1980s, there was strong leadership in the executive and legislative branches, as well as within the agency itself. Commissioner of Education Sergi commented, "Sometimes great leadership is saying 'yes' and O'Neill said 'yes' three times. Gerry [Tirozzi] went to him to say we wanted a Blue Ribbon Committee to examine teacher salaries and he said 'yes.' The Governor's Commission was chaired by Tim Moynihan—who was majority leader in the House and Chair of the Democratic party—a good politician. O'Neill said 'yes' to the recommendations of the Commission; he said 'yes' to the funding implications." In the case of the CEEC, the impetus for the reform agenda came from the business community, not the education community. Governor Lowell Weicker and Commissioner of Education Vincent Ferrandino were preoccupied with the *Sheff* lawsuit and gave little attention to the CEEC. As one state agency manager commented, "with no one to put the right people in the right places to make it happen—both idea-wise, and more so, strategy-wise," the CEEC turned into a decentralized, fragmented and chaotic process out of which emerged

neither a clear policy agenda nor political support to get a legislative initiative passed. Commissioner of Education Vincent Ferrandino's style of leadership was one of brokering interests, rather than seeking to shape ideas or transform preferences. As one Department official commented, "Vince believed it was important to listen to the people to get what they want. When there are too many people with different interests, the loudest voice wins. In this case, it was Kay Wall." In contrast, in the period leading up to the passage of the EEA, there was clear leadership and direction coming from the Commissioner. Tirozzi "was most visible on purpose. He chose to be visible and controversial intentionally. It took some courage...he was never afraid to step out and say what was on his mind," commented one member of the media. A CSDE staff member further elaborated that, "in the 1980s, there was always a sense of where we wanted to get to....I don't remember anybody doing anything other than putting their finger in the air—which way is the wind blowing—with the CEEC."

A bureaucratically-driven policy agenda—that is, one in which agency staff were actively involved in strategizing and crafting a policy agenda—was also an important factor in the success of the EEA and its absence may have been a crucial factor in the demise of the CEEC reform agenda. A former CSDE staff member noted that, "Leadership really was the people in the Department, who took broad objectives and put some meat on them." In strong contrast to the process leading to the passage of the EEA legislation, the CSDE staff provided only limited resources and attention to the CEEC initiative, as it was overshadowed by the *Sheff* lawsuit. Consequently, the CEEC agenda was orchestrated largely by external interests (primarily business groups) who had little

understanding of the political process. A former state official commented, “Kennedy [CEO of Union Carbide] was stunned by the legislative process—he was used to structures in which decisions are made and then it happens. That is not life in the political arena.”

In summary, events leading to the passage of the Education Enhancement Act were significant in terms of building agency technical capacity, mobilizing talent and ideas in the Department, creating leadership opportunities at middle management levels, and creating a strong and credible role for the CSDE in state-wide education policy-making. The successful passage of the EEA reforms in the mid-1980s was attributable not just to favorable economic conditions and national attention to education issues, but also strong leadership and a bureaucratically-driven reform agenda carefully crafted over time that allowed for the building of political support both inside and outside the education community. Despite the shift in the state’s political and economic environment in the early 1990s and the failure of the CEEC reform attempt, the CSDE continued to implement the EEA agenda of enhancing the quality of teachers through the development of innovative teacher assessments through the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program. As recently noted in the report of the National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future, “Like the bunny battery that never stops, Connecticut keeps honing its commitment to quality teaching” (p. 89). Chapter Five will discuss the process of continued policy innovation from the perspective of the phenomenon of bureaucratic entrepreneurship within a state agency.

CHAPTER 5

CONNECTICUT'S TEACHER STANDARDS INITIATIVES: AN IN-DEPTH EXAMINATION OF BUREAUCRATIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The previous chapter contrasted the two comprehensive, state-level reform attempts which occurred in Connecticut in the last two decades: the first a bureaucratically-driven education reform movement that successfully established a framework for continued policy development in the areas of standards and accountability for educators (the Education Enhancement Act of 1986); and the second a largely unsuccessful reform attempt (the Commission on Educational Excellence in Connecticut, whose recommendations failed to emerge in legislation in 1995) in which the state agency played only a minor role in terms of providing policy direction and guidance. By contrasting these two reform efforts, one sees that state agency managers and staff were credible, forceful actors in the formulation of state education policy leading to the successful EEA reform agenda, and that absence of state agency leadership, ideas, and political coalition-building contributed to the demise of the CEEC.

Furthermore, these two reform attempts are illustrative of two competing models of leadership and policy-making. The EEA reforms were representative of a policy-making model in which state agency leadership, ideas and persuasion were central to crafting a policy agenda and in which agency bureaucrats functioned as policy entrepreneurs. In contrast, the CEEC reform initiative was an arena in which competing, self-serving interest were striving for consensus, and there was neither strong leadership

nor a strong state agency presence to build political support for the reform agenda either inside or outside the education community.

This chapter will describe how bureaucratic entrepreneurship is an outgrowth of a policy-making model in which ideas and persuasion are central. The factors that contributed to the success of the EEA as a bureaucratically-driven state-level education reform initiative—that is, strong leadership at the upper and middle levels of the agency, capacity-building through the recruitment of staff with technical expertise in diverse areas, and empowerment of agency personnel to come up with ideas and craft a policy agenda—were also critical to creating an agency culture conducive to innovation, learning, and group problem-solving. As a consequence, agency staff functioning as bureaucratic entrepreneurs were able to take the broad statutory framework of the EEA around higher salaries and standards for teachers and transform them into concrete policy innovations that have been sustained over time. As former Connecticut Commissioner of Education Gerald N. Tirozzi, currently U.S. assistant secretary for elementary and secondary education, commented, “All of [Connecticut’s] reform efforts of the 1980s have staying power. Other states are beginning now to do what we were doing ten years ago.” Furthermore, this chapter will describe how some of the prominent features of bureaucratic entrepreneurship—i.e., risk-taking, engaging in opportunistic behavior, and pursuing innovative research and development—emerged in the context of Connecticut’s teacher standards initiatives, how policy diffusion played a role in both the initial development of Connecticut’s teacher assessment innovations and subsequent influence of Connecticut’s work on other states’ efforts to raise teacher standards, and how the

incentives and capacity-building features of Connecticut's teacher standards initiatives have changed expectations for Connecticut's veteran educators over time.

Establishing Agency Capacity and a Culture of Bureaucratic Entrepreneurship

The preceding chapter described how state agency personnel, beginning under the administration of Commissioner of Education Mark Shedd, were encouraged to act as “policy” entrepreneurs—that is, bringing forth new ideas, mobilizing resources, and exercising leadership to alter existing educational policies and institutional structures. As the Connecticut case study suggests, bureaucratic activism in policy-making and the development of policy innovation emerged because of three factors: *leadership*, the *building of capacity* within the agency so that new ideas and technologies to shape public policy could be brought forth, and *empowerment* of agency personnel to act as leaders at all levels of the agency. Leadership in the early 1980s involved not just brokering or building political coalitions among specific interests, but creating a vision and shaping the ideas and preferences of agency personnel, the education community, legislators and other important political constituents. The leader also functioned as an educator—that is, interpreting the role and character of the enterprise, developing models for thought and behavior, redefining meanings, and exacting commitments—as well as infusing day-to-day behavior with long-run meaning and purpose (March and Olsen, 1989; Selznick, 1957). Technical capacity was built in the agency in two ways. First, staff with specific expertise were recruited. Second, a “learning organization” was created within the agency—that is,

what Senge (1990) describes as “where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to learn together” (p. 3).

As noted earlier, Mark Shedd began the process of building the capacity of the state agency in the mid-1970s by recruiting talented young people with expertise in such areas as law, public policy, measurement and social science research. This enabled the agency to collect and report data related to student performance, educational quality and the distribution of resources. As one of Shedd’s executive assistants noted, “He valued research and evaluation. He brought Pat Forgione¹ into the Department. He talked about resource-building and capacity-building. He felt that the SDE had to be viewed by other policy makers as having the data about what was important.” By organizing the CSDE into separate budget, research and evaluation, and curriculum bureaus, he was further able to consolidate the talent within the agency and cultivate capacity.

Commissioner of Education Mark Shedd was almost universally characterized as a visionary, whereas his successor, Gerald N. Tirozzi, was described as “savvy.” In the opinions of some SDE personnel, Tirozzi may not have been the originator of ideas, but he understood the importance of having talented staff in the agency who would bring forth new ideas. Tirozzi himself acknowledged that, “To be successful [in moving an agenda forward], you have to have a staff that is dedicated, competent and have credibility in the

¹ Pascal Forgione, currently head of the National Center of Educational Statistics and former Superintendent of Schools for Delaware, was Chief of the Office of Research, Evaluation and Assessment during the period Gerald Tirozzi was Connecticut Commissioner of Education.

field—such as Forgione, Sternberg, Rindone, Schaefer².... They need to be both competent and visible in the field.... A lot of kudos go to the staff. If you don't have staff, you can't get things done. It has to be a marriage, almost a polygamous marriage."

Under both the Shedd and Tirozzi administrations, the agency culture was transformed. Schein (1992) notes that, "If one wants to distinguish leadership from management or administration, one can argue that leaders create and change cultures, while managers and administrators live within them" (p. 15). He further notes that culture and leadership are two sides of the same coin, as leaders first create cultures when they create groups and organizations. Once these cultures exist, they determine the culture for leadership and determine who will or not will be a leader. In the case of the CSDE, Commissioners Shedd and Tirozzi empowered agency staff to be creative and to be leaders within their fields. As one former bureau chief commented, "There was something about the culture we created. There was a culture of excellence which we created. It was a bully-pit—it was competitive—you had to perform.... Once you build a concept of excellence, it builds upon itself." A state education consultant elaborated further, "Between 1982 and 1989, I think people were really encouraged to be visionary, they were encouraged to push the envelope. There was a spirit of "can-do-ism" in this bureaucracy that really made it a golden age." In speaking of the success of the EEA, he further elaborated, "So it was really the right people in the right place in the right time, but most importantly, they were encouraged, they were recognized, they were rewarded

² Gerald Tirozzi was referring at that time to middle-level managers in the agency, such as Pascal Forgione, Betty Sternberg, Douglas Rindone, and Larry Schaefer.

for doing those things. It was really a departmental culture rather than anything else that said we can do it, go for it, put it on the table, and then it came together.”

Shedd and Tirozzi created a think tank environment within the agency, which was instrumental in creating knowledge and expertise among agency staff members. One CSDE staff member commented about the laying of the groundwork for the EEA, it was “a matter of research and brainstorming...the staff was expected to be familiar with what is going on in the field, write position papers, and discuss them.” Pascal Forgione, then Chief of the Office of Research, Evaluation and Assessment, commented with regard to the 1978 Educational Evaluation and Remedial Assistance (EERA) legislation,³ “Part of what we started to do was to discuss how to profile data; we slowly built capacity to do so. The goal-setting law...I tried to use is as a way for people to reflect on their priorities.” Agency staff recognized that the most powerful way to influence public policy was through the establishment of statewide student performance goals and dissemination to the public of student performance data by school and by district—in effect, using assessment and accountability reporting as tools of persuasion.

The building of the agency’s technical capacity for future development of innovative teacher performance assessments began in the early 1980s, when the State Board of Education adopted the requirement that prospective teachers entering into teacher training programs in Connecticut would first have to achieve a passing score on a basic skills test of reading, writing and mathematics competency (the CONNCEPT examination). To provide guidance in the development of testing policy and the content

³ The EERA established a ninth grade student proficiency test and required the state and local districts to establish goals for students and report on progress.

of the tests, the Teacher Examination Development Panel (TEDP) was convened. The TEDP, described by one CSDE staff member as a “very diverse, high powered group,” was comprised of educators as well as psychometricians, researchers, and representatives of business and industry. As Pascal D. Forgione, observed, “I recognized that we needed a technical advisory group to protect us from politics and mediocrity. With Ed Gordon⁴ chairing it, we had someone with credibility who could convince people of the importance of scientific knowledge and content...[the TEDP] brought credibility—this was the external group to validate quality, to influence the Department.” The TEDP examined tests of basic skills then available through national testing firms, but recommended instead that the CSDE build its own teacher test. National Evaluation Systems was awarded a contract; however, CSDE staff undertook the principal role of developers of the Connecticut test. Raymond Pecheone, who was at that time Coordinator of the Teacher Assessment Unit, commented, “Here we did some unusual things. With the CONNCEPT exam, we had NES as the contractor, but we hired some of the best people in the country to write items.... We learned by doing. When we started, the tests were so poor that you had to do a better job. You didn’t have to be a rocket scientist to see what the tests were...we were willing to make changes. Our learning curve occurred early...when the money came, we proliferated. We hired people like ourselves, we shared information.” Pascal D. Forgione further elaborated that, “it was more than just the tests—we attracted a set of people in the Department.... We were able to bring in good people with those

⁴ Director of the Bush Center in Child Development Social Policy at Yale University at that time.

resources. Some knew schools, some knew classrooms, some were scientists, some knew measurement. That positioned us for the real battle—the real reform.”

For certain key agency personnel, the real “battle” signified pushing for educational quality and leveraging changes in expectations for teachers by developing new forms of policy mechanisms such as teacher assessments that focused less on “inputs” (such as the prerequisite knowledge of basic content) and more on “outputs,” or the demonstration of actual teaching competency in the classroom—concepts that were novel at the time. The impetus for these innovations came from middle-level managers in the agency, who had a vision of what they were trying to pursue and were empowered to be leaders in their fields.

Technical capacity had to be developed within the agency itself in order “to leap from a lower level teacher agenda” that screened candidates through paper-and-pencil tests for basic skills and content knowledge to actual “on the job” performance assessments of the application of content and pedagogical knowledge during the first few years of teaching.⁵ The decision of the agency to reject the paper-and-pencil tests of essential skills for teachers offered by national testing firms such as Educational Testing Service and to develop its own assessments proved to be pivotal: (1) first, the development process was instrumental in building technical capacity within the agency for

⁵ Assessment of essential reading, writing and mathematics skills for prospective teachers and those first being certified in Connecticut was through the CONNCEPT test (developed by National Evaluation Systems for use only in Connecticut). Teacher content knowledge—except for elementary education—was assessed through examinations developed by Educational Testing Service and validated for use by committees of Connecticut educators. Elementary teachers were assessed for their content knowledge through the CONNECT examination, a test developed by CSDE staff working with National Computer Systems (NCS). This test was considered unique at that time because it incorporated a performance assessment of pedagogical knowledge.

future development of new forms of assessing teacher knowledge such as structured interviews and portfolio assessments, and (2) the high standards associated with these paper-and-pencil tests⁶ captured the attention of educators statewide as well as the deans of the school of higher education by communicating the seriousness of the state's intent to raise standards for new teachers. In this manner, the precedent was being set for using teacher assessment as a powerful mechanism to persuade educators as well as the public that raising standards for teachers was key to improving student achievement.

Beginning in the late 1970s and continuing into the 1980s, the agency developed an organizational climate conducive to innovation, learning and group problem-solving. By identifying talented people and developing their expertise through innovative research and development, a "parallel learning structure" was created within the agency—that is, a "structure" that operates "parallel" or side-by-side with the formal hierarchy and structure of an organization for the purposes of increasing the organization's "learning" (Bushe and Shani, 1991). Such a structure promotes a climate for "thinking, talking, deciding and acting differently than what normally takes place at work" (p. 10).

It was within this context of leadership, capacity-building, empowerment of agency personnel, and learning that the foundation was laid for the emergence of bureaucratic entrepreneurship. One of its manifestations was the development of innovative teacher performance assessments and the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) induction program for beginning teachers.

⁶ Only 62.9% of test takers in the first administration of CONNCEPT in the 1985-86 school year passed or were eligible for a waiver of the test [Prowda, 1998].

The Next Generation of Connecticut's Teacher Assessments:
The Adoption, Adaptation and Diffusion of Ideas

Concurrent with the phase-in of the CONNCEPT examination in the mid-1980s as a licensing requirement for new teachers, agency staff also began developing performance assessments for teachers participating in the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program. The involvement of CSDE staff in policy networks⁷ such as the Council of Chief State School Officers, Stanford Teacher Assessment Project, National Governors' Association, and American Educational Research Association played an important role in stimulating the ideas that created the groundwork for Connecticut's innovative work and ensuring that that work would be sustained over time.

Connecticut was by no means the only state trying to raise teacher standards through assessment. In the mid-1980s, forty-one states required some form of teacher testing as part of initial teacher licensure requirements—usually some form of examination assessing prospective teachers' reading, writing and mathematical skills as well as content knowledge requirements. Because existing paper-and-pencil tests were not considered adequate to capture relevant teaching knowledge or a teacher's ability to apply that knowledge, a number of states had added or were considering adding on-the-job performance assessments to their other licensing requirements (Wise and Darling-Hammond, 1987).

Connecticut staff looked in particular at the classroom observation assessment systems being used in three states—that is, the Florida Performance Measurement System,

⁷ Gray (1994) defines policy networks as loose collections of participants and policy entrepreneurs in a variety of settings such as government, professional associations, interest groups and universities.

Georgia's Teacher Performance Instrument, and the Texas Appraisal System. Raymond L. Pecheone⁸ commented that, "We did what every researcher did...we looked at the work that was being done in classroom observations...we collected all the research, the articles, and then we [went] to the Chief State School Officers large-scale assessment conference. We decided to have a forum at the...conference. It was very early on. We basically went there and had a two day brainstorming session. We asked them to give us their best advice about what other [teacher] observation systems were out there." Following that conference, the CSDE issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) and two bidders responded: the developers of the Georgia observation system (H. Coker and D. Medley) and a New Hampshire-based firm, RMC Research Corporation. RMC was awarded the contract; however, CSDE staff assumed major roles in the actual development work, with substantial involvement of Connecticut teachers and administrators. Raymond Pecheone recalls one brainstorming session related to identifying expectations for beginning teacher competency, "We had then the '60 minutes' format, a panel of practitioners whom we questioned and interviewed on a stage—Carole Sarabun, Mary Lou Bargnesi, other practitioners...." A small development team, consisting of a teacher, two administrators, and a higher education faculty member as well as CSDE staff, was charged with creating the actual assessment instrument, which was subsequently pilot-tested in Connecticut and Rhode Island. When asked what led to the pursuit of assessment models that differed from what was already in use, Raymond Pecheone answered candidly, "I think it's being egocentric in this manner—that was the

⁸ Dr. Pecheone was then Coordinator of the Teacher Testing Unit in the Office of Research, Evaluation and Assessment.

way I was. I was always cynical about testing. I was very much wanting to experiment around things. I was also encouraged by Pat [Forgione]. He always said, go for it.”

What emerged was an assessment instrument and process that differed significantly from the Florida, Georgia, and Texas teacher assessment systems. A 1987 RAND Corporation report had criticized the beginning teacher evaluation systems in those states for attempting to be “evaluator-proof” by measuring and quantifying only those teaching variables that are easily measured and quantifiable through checklists of specific discrete behaviors of teachers. In addition, these systems mixed licensing and employment decisions by using school district personnel as evaluators of already hired beginning teachers. “Though they are trained by the state and obliged to follow state guidelines, the primary loyalty of these administrators is to their school district. The result is potential conflict of interest in the enforcement of state standards” (Wise and Darling-Hammond, 1987, p. 31). The Connecticut system differed significantly from those observation systems as it was comprised of only ten broad indicators of teacher quality and it employed a holistic scoring system relying on the professional judgment of highly trained state assessors from outside the district of the beginning teacher. As described by Pechione and Stansbury (1996), “Connecticut Competency Instrument assessors script teacher and student behaviors during a lesson, sort evidence by indicator, and judge whether most evidence represents a satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance” (p. 165).

As innovative as Connecticut’s classroom observation assessment system was, it was still a generic observation system—that is, applicable to all content areas—and limited in addressing the content-specific nature of teaching and such important dimensions of

teaching as planning, reflection on teaching, and evaluation of student learning. As a consequence, under the guise of augmenting the pencil-and-paper tests of content knowledge, Department staff quietly began to experiment with alternative forms of assessment such as videotaped semi-structured interviews with beginning mathematics and social studies teachers. The former chief of the Office of Research, Evaluation and Assessment commented, Pascal D. Forgione remarked, “I made [Ray Pecheone] promise to be covert, not overt.... We got Gerry [Tirozzi] to support the idea of content tests; that gave us the resources to introduce pedagogical research. The overt was content; the covert was pedagogical content and tests.” Clearly, Connecticut’s development of content-specific teacher assessments operated in a manner similar to the “skunk works” or “creative subversion” that is attributable to “intrapreneurs,” a term coined by Levin and Sanger (1994) to describe people working within large private organizations who conduct innovative product development “underground.”

Connecticut’s early development work soon began attracting national attention through CSDE staff contacts with national networks. This attention, in turn, helped secure the support of agency leaders for the continued development of new, innovative forms of teacher assessment. Noted one CSDE staff member, “Pat [Forgione] was such a ball of fire. Gerry [Tirozzi] knew [Pat] had some negative attributes, for example, he alienated staff, but he was always tying people into national efforts. It gave him a special status in the agency that Gerry protected. We felt we had no obstacles because we had the support of the Commissioner. Lori [Aronson] was a complete advocate. She greased the skids, always counseled us, don’t worry about the politics, give us your best.... Once

we got national visibility, Gerry became totally supportive. We were making him famous.”

It was in the late 1980s that partnerships between Connecticut and other states were formed and collaborative structures institutionalized that would eventually facilitate the diffusion of Connecticut’s teacher assessment innovations to other states. At that time, the California State Department of Education, then under the leadership of State Superintendent Bill Honig, was experimenting with different induction programs for new teachers. Connecticut staff were invited to California to pilot-test the Connecticut Competency Instrument (the classroom observation instrument used to assess beginning teachers for licensure in Connecticut) in several districts, as well as to involve California teachers in developmental activities in connection with Connecticut’s new content-specific teacher assessments (the semi-structured interviews). In late March, 1997, at a Council of Chief State School Officers conference, Connecticut Commissioner of Education Gerald N. Tirozzi and California Superintendent of Schools Bill Honig decided to apply jointly for a \$50,000 15-month grant from the National Governors’ Association to establish an interstate consortium “that would recognize and support the implementation of the Carnegie Forum’s recommendations to improve the teaching profession” (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, 1988, p. 3). This work was to be coordinated with the research and development efforts of Stanford University’s Teacher Assessment Project, funded by the Carnegie Corporation and directed by Lee Shulman, who was developing prototypes of teacher assessments for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). This grant created the Interstate New

Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, one of whose missions was to align standards and assessments for beginning educators with those for veteran educators being certified by the National Board. Consortium Charter members included the California State Department of Education, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and the Connecticut State Department of Education, with Commissioner Gerald Tirozzi, Pascal D. Forgione, and Raymond Pecheone serving as the Connecticut members of the Consortium governing board. A Memorandum of Understanding between the charter members created a legal foundation for linking assessment research and development activity in California and Connecticut with the Teacher Assessment Project at Stanford and the NBPTS. Mark S. Tucker, executive director of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, whose report *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* recommended the creation of a National Board for certifying exemplary teachers, was quoted in a *Hartford Courant* article on the Connecticut/California teacher assessment collaboration: “‘Connecticut is absolutely out in front of this’” (Frahm, 1987, p. C1).

These collaborations proved to be important vehicles for increasing the technical capacity of agency staff and diffusing Connecticut’s emerging teacher policies and assessment technologies to other states. Pascal D. Forgione remarked that, “The NGA Project and Mark Tucker were tremendous vehicles for pushing us forward. We didn’t know what good was...that’s why we started creating these assessments—staff development for our own staff. By the time we got to BEST, we knew what quality was. We also had capacity.” The work funded by the NGA grant also made Connecticut’s work more visible nationally, as a requirement of the grant was to conduct regional

conferences around the country on new strategies of teacher assessment and support. By the time the NGA grant expired, it was clear to those leading Connecticut's teacher assessment initiatives that, with this type of labor-intensive, technically complex innovative work, some form of supportive infrastructure outside the state education agency was needed to ensure the growth of broad-based support for teacher induction and assessment and to secure additional financial and technical resources to continue this innovative developmental effort. In late 1988, Pascal Forgione and Gerald Tirozzi approached the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to see if they would sponsor the Interstate New Teacher Support and Assessment Consortium (INTASC) project and expand its mission to enhance collaboration among states interested in re-thinking teacher assessment for initial licensing as well as for preparation and induction into the profession. That charge was accepted, and since then, Connecticut has remained a major player in the INTASC teacher portfolio development work and has benefited from that organization's role in building support for beginning teacher standards, induction and assessment throughout the country. As Raymond Pecheone commented, "First of all, we founded it. It was our baby. Without other states following our lead or breaking ground, this whole reform could have failed....It helped us to get money, to do national research, be leaders." In addition, INTASC has subsequently proven to be an influential and powerful vehicle for the diffusion of policy related to teacher standards and for sharing with other states the assessment technology first developed in Connecticut. Arthur Wise, now President of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, a participating professional organization of INTASC, commented that, "Connecticut has been very influential....The

technology for teacher assessment at the licensure level has not existed, and Connecticut has gone further than any other state in investing in that technology, and others will take advantage of that knowledge now.”

Connecticut’s pioneering work in teacher performance assessments during the late 1980s and early 1990s was instrumental to the agency’s success in influencing the development of national assessments for veteran teachers. In 1992, Connecticut, in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh, was awarded the first assessment development contract issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). It was through that effort that a prototype content-specific teacher portfolio assessment for middle school English language arts teachers was developed. Teaching portfolios, whose structures are very similar to the models developed in Connecticut, are today one of several forms of assessment used to determine teachers’ eligibility for National Board certification. Unlike the semi-structured interview, which was a form of performance simulation exercise, the teaching portfolio provided face validity to the assessment process, as it documented the real work of teachers in their own classrooms over a period of time. Connecticut’s contribution to the development of a National Board teacher portfolio assessment combined with its leadership in the INTASC portfolio assessment development work fueled Connecticut’s own developmental efforts around developing portfolio assessments for beginning teachers participating in the BEST Program.

Changing the System: Sustaining Policy Innovation Over Time

As important as it was for the CSDE to attain national visibility to secure resources and political support for Connecticut's innovative teacher assessment development work, it was also critical to gain the support of Connecticut teachers, whose voluntary participation as mentors or assessors of beginning teachers was central to the successful implementation of the BEST Program. One principal wryly commented, "You [the bureaucrats] can decide what you want, but who will make or break it are the teachers—also administrators. It's not something overt." As former Commissioner Gerald Tirozzi noted, "Policy begins when the classroom door closes."

Gaining the support of teachers was also integral to shifting the perception of the state's educators about what constituted effective teaching and, as a result, affecting the standards and processes used by local districts to evaluate veteran teachers as well as the standards and content of Connecticut pre-service education programs. The two principal systems-changing strategies used by the CSDE included involving large number of practitioners in planning and development activities related to support and assessing beginning teachers and training large numbers of experienced educators to serve as mentors and assessors of beginning teachers.

During the early design phases of both the support and assessment components of the BEST Program, CSDE staff developed draft position papers and convened numerous groups of educators around the state to comment on and critique the evolving program design. As one former staff member commented, "that is the best way policy gets made—

including as many people as possible in the planning process, and in the planning you make the change happen. It's not when you get the plan done.... You keep everything in draft form and you keep drafting and you keep having people respond to the drafts. That's how people become knowledgeable about what you're trying to accomplish... and that's how change starts to happen." Teachers, administrators and higher education faculty were also actively involved in the development of the actual teacher performance assessments. Former Connecticut Education Association President, Edward Dorsett, recollected, "When Ray [Peccheone] started first to make waves in teacher assessment... I can remember Ray saying—I was President of CEA then—that in the development of this assessment component for teachers, that teachers were going to be involved. He said it emphatically, and by golly, in my experience, that's exactly what happened in this ten or twelve years. Teachers have been involved every step of the way. And I think that has been a huge policy decision on the part of Ray."

A former Regional Educational Service Center staff member who assisted the CSDE in developing training for assessors and beginning teachers participating in the Connecticut Competency Instrument (CCI) assessments, noted that, "When I look back—it was a whirlwind of chaos, out of which came a clear, very fine piece of work. The piece of work was... the CCI which not only was designed for new teachers, but in fact revolutionized what any teacher in the state could be judged by... it was a stunning document... and that was the result of hundreds and hundreds of peoples' input."

Support for the Connecticut Competency Instrument (CCI), the classroom observation instrument for beginning teachers, grew as more and more teachers and

administrators were trained by the state to serve as mentors and assessors of beginning teachers. This was an important mechanism for persuading the state's veteran teaching force about the importance of holding not just beginning teachers, but also veteran teachers accountable for high standards of professional performance. A mathematics teacher who was trained to be both a CCI assessor and later a scorer of beginning teacher portfolios commented, "I became a CCI person....I was very impressed by the training. At the time, I thought it was one of the most professionally rewarding activities that I ever had, period...it had an effect, a big effect." Regarding the mathematics teaching portfolio, he further commented that, "I find that to be a fascinating process, because now we're seeing two things—now we're getting into that teacher's classroom and into that teacher's mind through what they write....Then we look at the videotape—now we get to see that image of the teacher, now we get to watch that teacher teach." It should be noted that the teachers unions actively supported the involvement of experienced teachers in evaluating beginning teachers as long as they were not in the same bargaining unit. A former teacher, now a central office administrator, observed that, "It was teacher empowerment at its finest. Right from the conception. Veteran teachers to take charge and take ownership of this program—work with their colleagues and create ideal situations in which new teachers could be inducted....Bob Chase, the [current National Education Association] president is advocating this, you know...if [he] were in Connecticut these past ten years instead of where he is, he might see this as fitting beautifully with the whole notion of empowering teachers again."

The training of large numbers of teachers and administrators was an intentional strategy used by CSDE staff to broaden the impact of the BEST Program beyond beginning teachers who were required to demonstrate standards of professional competency in order to be re-licensed and to build capacity within the local districts for more effective local district evaluation practices. A former CSDE staff member commented, “the real group we were trying to impact was those professional teachers who were pretty much set in place and not real eager to do a lot of professional development.” Between 1986 and 1988, approximately 4100 or thirteen percent of the active teacher work force were trained to be mentors of beginning teachers (Connecticut State Board of Education, 1990). By 1996, nearly twenty percent of the state’s teachers had been trained as BEST Program mentors or assessors, which—when combined with the approximately 14,000 beginning teachers hired over the preceding ten years who had participated in the BEST Program—has resulted in nearly forty percent of the state’s educator work force having been trained in effective teaching practices promoted through the BEST Program assessments and training (Connecticut State Board of Education, 1997).

The impact of the BEST Program assessments on defining what constitutes effective teaching also became increasingly clear to school district administrators. A superintendent of schools in an urban district observed that, “We squawk a little about it, but, to me, I think what the state has done in terms of driving instruction through the BEST Program, raising the level of discourse in what constitutes good teaching, it’s a very sophisticated model with its performance-based dimension for licensure. I think the

impact has been very profound....I link that directly to the push from the state—this is not something that just came from the bottom up. Its roots are the Education Enhancement Act and the Department’s response to it.” Another former superintendent commented about the BEST Program, “it did establish a framework for evaluation. We told our principals and supervisors that this was important and set [the CCI] as their agenda.”

The impact of Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program in raising standards for new teachers also attracted the support of the business community in the early 1990s. The May, 1992, report issued by the Connecticut Business for Education Coalition, Inc. (CBEC), expressed concerns about the impact of state funding cutbacks for the BEST Program from \$10 Million in 1990-91 to approximately \$3 Million in 1992. The report recommended that, not only should the BEST Program be maintained, but “[instead] of reducing this program to a mere shadow of its former self, the state might wish to explore options for ensuring that all Connecticut educators can demonstrate mastery of the ten indicators measured by the Connecticut Competency Instrument”⁹ (Connecticut Business for Education Coalition, Inc., 1992, p. 13). The CEEC expanded the CBEC recommendations to propose a new teacher certification continuum, incorporating performance assessments into licensing requirements for veteran teachers every five years. The two teachers unions in their minority report objected strenuously to these proposals, noting, “The new licensing system should concern taxpayers who could spend as much as \$50 million to expand a State Department of Education assessment and

⁹ The Connecticut Competency Instrument (CCI) measures essential teaching competencies common to all teachers regardless of subject area of grade levels through classroom observation by state-trained assessors. Beginning in 1989, beginning teachers were required to successfully complete the CCI assessment in order to be eligible for provisional certification.

support[,] a program that—to date—has been used only on beginning teachers, and has never been comprehensively examined for effectiveness by an independent evaluator” (Commission on Educational Excellence in Connecticut, 1994, p. 45). As noted in Chapter Five, union opposition to the new licensing requirements as well to the proposed tenure provisions was instrumental in the defeat of the CEEC legislative package. The failure of the CEEC plan to change teacher certification laws, however, did not prevent CSDE agency staff from continuing to expand the scope and impact of its teacher assessment policies within the statutory framework of the EEA.

Connecticut’s innovative work in the area of teacher standards and assessment in the decade following the passage of the EEA illustrates how agency personnel functioning as bureaucratic entrepreneurs took the teacher standards framework of the EEA and used teacher licensure and induction policies as a policy tool to improve teaching and learning across the state. Like their entrepreneurial counterparts in the private sector, they took risks, sought creative sources of revenue and resources to support experimentation (such as through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards grants and the INTASC collaboration), engaged in covert research and development activities to develop technical capacity for creating innovative forms of teacher assessments, and intentionally underestimated the difficulty of achieving their objectives. When top agency leadership shifted in the early 1990s and public attention was focused on the *Sheff* lawsuit and the CEEC reform attempt, middle level agency managers assumed the major leadership roles in moving forward with Connecticut’s teacher standards. As one agency manager noted,

“Once [Gerry Tirozzi] left, we had so much momentum we could not stop the train—both in the context of teacher and student standards—both big engines of change.”

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This case study of bureaucratically-driven state education reform in Connecticut illustrates that state departments of education can be important players in the formulation of state education policy. In order for bureaucratic organizations to operate not only as implementers of policies but rather as autonomous decision-making entities driven by a mission of moral obligation or larger social purpose, a special type of leadership is necessary—one in which leaders seek to educate and transform preferences through the power of ideas. That type of leadership first appeared within the state agency in the 1970s and 1980s. Former Commissioner of Education Mark Shedd believed that state government could serve as the engine of equity and provide students with opportunities, and he motivated and inspired newly recruited individuals in the agency to overcome political and bureaucratic barriers to strive for an educational agenda of equity and excellence. His successor, Gerald N. Tirozzi, continued that legacy by further building technical capacity and resources within the agency so that data on student performance and available resources could be reported to local school districts and the public. Tirozzi also used the office of Commissioner of Education as the “bully pulpit” to raise public awareness of disparities in educational opportunity in Connecticut and alter the political climate around education. In the 1990s, leadership shifted more to middle-level agency managers and professional staff, who continued the legacy of agency policy activism.

Strong leadership and capacity-building within the agency along with empowerment of agency personnel to be creative and bring forth new ideas provided fertile ground for the emergence of bureaucratic entrepreneurship. Bureaucratic entrepreneurship is, in fact, an outgrowth of a notion of leadership and a policy-making model based on ideas and persuasion. Entrepreneurs are generally opportunistic, passionate, and driven to pursue new ways of doing things. They are willing to take risks and frequently underestimate the difficulty of accomplishing their objectives. Unlike their business counterparts who are rewarded with personal profit and recognition for their technological or manufacturing innovations, bureaucratic entrepreneurs usually receive little in the way of public recognition or tangible rewards for their policy innovations.¹ The return on their investment of time, energy and resources consists of altering the understanding of policy issues and alternatives and changing social and political structures. Connecticut's innovative work in the area of teacher standards and assessment within the legislative framework of EEA is illustrative of how SDE personnel—including middle managers and professional staff—experimented with new forms of teacher assessment and related teacher professional development within a licensure context and subsequently created a policy tool to leverage improvements in teaching and learning across the state.

¹ It should be noted that certain individuals in the CSDE who served as "bureaucratic entrepreneurs" subsequently benefited from their reputations as innovators and have since gone on to positions of national prominence—e.g., Gerald Tirozzi, as U.S. assistant secretary of elementary and secondary education in the Clinton administration and Pascal Forgione, President of the National Center for Education Statistics.

Conclusions of Research

Five conclusions can be drawn from this study of bureaucratically-driven education reform and bureaucratic entrepreneurship:

- 1) *Successful bureaucratically-driven education reform requires strong leadership and technical capacity.*
- 2) *Bureaucratic entrepreneurs can be "grown."*
- 3) *Policy windows can be created.*
- 4) *Bureaucratic entrepreneurship is critical to sustain policy innovation over time.*
- 5) *There is a strong role to be played by state departments of education in shaping educational public policy.*

Successful Bureaucratically-driven Education Reform Requires Strong Leadership and Technical Capacity

Successful bureaucratically-driven education reform requires more than the creation of a policy agenda and the passage of legislation. It requires the building of an agency infrastructure to implement that agenda and to continue the pursuit of innovation so the reforms can be sustained over time. This case study suggests that the essential elements of bureaucratically-driven education reform are: (1) strong leadership at all levels of the agency; and (2) capacity (both in terms of human and fiscal resources).

Former Education Commissioners Mark Shedd and Gerald N. Tirozzi created a legacy within the state education agency that persists to this day—specifically, that of an activist state agency using standards and accountability as tools to shape public policy.

The foundation was laid for what is today cited by former Commissioner Gerald N Tirozzi as “one of the most formidable assessment programs in the country,” which longitudinally tracks data on students to measure progress in education reform (Flax, 1997, p. 83). Furthermore, Connecticut is recognized as having an exemplary state accountability mechanism through its reporting of educational indicators (Wohlstetter, 1991). The agency’s ability to shape state education policy required leaders with vision who could shape the ideas and preferences of individuals both inside and outside the agency. It also required the recruitment of talented young people into the agency who did not fit the stereotypes of agency bureaucrats, but who had instead broad policy expertise as well as technical knowledge in such areas as measurement, evaluation, social science, and law. One CSDE education consultant commented that there is an interrelationship between leadership and competent staff in the agency.

It’s a symbiotic interplay between and among the people in the system. You can’t really separate them. The leader ends up changing the system, and the system is there to help the leader get the stuff done... What characterized this place when it worked the best is that it was an environment which nurtured and empowered people and valued ideas and discourse. At the same time it was a place where there was a leader with real vision and a spirit of “let’s do it” and “we can do it”... If you step back, a leader with those spirits—Gerry [Tirozzi], for example—walking into a system which hadn’t nurtured and empowered people would have fallen on his face. He couldn’t do it by itself. This took a lot of people.

Talented people in the agency were able to thrive and become leaders in their own right because they were supported by strong leaders at the top. A sufficient momentum was created in the agency that enabled policy innovations to continue even when top leadership in the agency shifted. Thus, after Gerald Tirozzi resigned as commissioner in 1991 and

during a year-and-a-half period of interim commissioners, the locus of leadership in terms of continuing the agency's teacher and student standards initiatives shifted to middle managers. This phenomenon also continued during the tenure of Commissioner of Education Vincent Ferrandino, who held quite a different view of leadership than that of his predecessors. He believed that the role of the Commissioner was to be a consensus-builder and the Department should be less activist, but more "user-friendly" to the districts. Despite having a Commissioner who was described as "being more in the mold of the traditional state superintendent," agency middle managers and professional staff who functioned as bureaucratic entrepreneurs continued to exert a strong state leadership role in the early and mid-1990s by implementing an agenda of standards and accountability through policy innovations such as the BEST Program, the development of second and third generations of the Connecticut Mastery Test, and enhancements to the state's Strategic School Profiles and other state educational indicator reporting systems.

Bureaucratic Entrepreneurs Can Be "Grown"

The appearance of "bureaucratic entrepreneurship" within the CSDE was not just the result of a confluence of favorable circumstances and certain personalities, as some observers have suggested. Rather, an environment or agency culture was created in which individuals who did not fit the stereotypes of bureaucrats were empowered to be leaders and to be creative. Furthermore, a learning organization was created within the agency

that contributed to the generation of ideas and expertise required of bureaucratic entrepreneurs.

Empowerment of agency staff to be leaders and entrepreneurs is not usually the case in state departments of education. Madsen (1994) in her personal account of working in an unnamed state department of education which was charged with implementing the state's "Education in Excellence Act," complained that, "The state department of education does not encourage creativity and progressive thinking. Many qualified personnel left the Department because of the prevailing mediocrity and the desire to maintain the *status quo* that defines the state-worker mentality" (p. 170). Marshall, Mitchell and Wirt (1989) in their study of state education policy activity admit that, although bureaucrats may accrue some long-term influence, "[in] education, the one operational principle is that [state education agency] staff are not expected to initiate policy, to lobby directly for proposals, or to manipulate other policy groups" (p. 38). This was not the case in Connecticut, as the legislature expected that agency staff would bring forth ideas and proposals. Furthermore, the Connecticut case study illustrates how state agency personnel, through the implementation of the BEST Program, were able to alter the political environment surrounding teacher accountability and standards.

This study also suggests that entrepreneurship in a public agency need not be purely circumstantial, subject to the fortuitous appearance of one or two idiosyncratic individuals into the organization. Rather, conditions conducive to entrepreneurship can be brought about by bringing creative individuals into the agency with specific technical expertise and forming an organizational culture of "can-do-ism" and strategic risk-taking.

In effect, an entrepreneurial culture is created within the organization. This idea contradicts the proposition made by Hebert and Link (1988) that the entrepreneur is a person, not a team, committee or organization, and reinforces instead the argument made by Roberts and King (1996) that team entrepreneurship can exist. In the case of Connecticut, *bureaucratic entrepreneurship can be seen as a process, rather than as simply the action of isolated individuals.*

The creation of a learning organization within the agency was also an integral part of creating an environment conducive to entrepreneurship and policy innovation. As Zaltman, Duncan and Holbek (1973) note in their study of innovation and organizational change, "...the creative process which is an important component of innovation operates best when there is a diversity among the individuals who are involved. Having a variety of individuals with different backgrounds is likely to bring more varied inputs into the creative process" (p. 124). Accordingly, even though the CSDE had actively recruited and hired individuals with specialized knowledge in research and measurement, the work that was being done in Connecticut in such areas as teacher assessment was ahead of its time, and there were few, if any, models to emulate around the country. Therefore, learning and group problem-solving through research and development activities were necessary to build the collective knowledge base of agency staff members. The presence of a learning organization (Senge, 1990) also may contribute to the emergence of individuals who function as bureaucratic entrepreneurs. Roberts and King (1996) observe that, "...although policy entrepreneurship springs from certain innate characteristics of personality and motivational makeup, much of public entrepreneurship is *learned*

behavior....We believe that a person can learn to behave more entrepreneurial even without an entrepreneurial identity, just as one can learn to behave more creatively even without strong natural abilities.”

Policy Windows Can be Created

Kingdon (1995) defines policy windows as opportunities for action on given initiatives that present themselves and stay open only for short periods. The extraordinary success of the CSDE in shaping the EEA education reform agenda has often been attributed to the opening of a policy window caused by a one-time confluence of factors, including galvanized public attention on the need to reform education, a robust economy accompanied by a large state surplus, and commitments by the Governor and legislature to institute education reform. If one more deeply examines the events leading to the EEA, however, a different interpretation is possible. One former agency staff member noted succinctly, “Sometimes it is luck; sometimes you *make* it luck.” There was indeed an extraordinary confluence of factors; however, the agency was ready with a well-articulated policy agenda and the knowledge, capacity and resources to implement it. Furthermore, the basis for political consensus had been built through the convening over the preceding four years of numerous committees and task forces made up of representative educational constituencies and led by CSDE staff.

The “window of opportunity” in the mid-1980s lay not so much in the phenomenon of the state putting forth a major education reform agenda (lots of states

were doing that), but rather in having the CSDE seize the moment to put forth its own agenda. In essence, the agency “proacted” rather than “reacted.” The creation of a culture of bureaucratic entrepreneurship in the agency over the next decade was crucial to seizing as well as creating similar windows of opportunity.

Bureaucratic Entrepreneurship is Critical to Sustaining Policy Innovation Over Time

The Connecticut case study illustrates that the presence of bureaucratic entrepreneurship within the agency was instrumental in perpetuating the state’s standards and accountability agenda during the tenure of an education commissioner whose philosophical stance was quite different about the role of the agency in setting public policy. Unlike appointed officials such as agency heads and deputies, whose positions are subject to the shifting winds of the political environment, career bureaucrats who function as entrepreneurs tend to have longer tenure within the agency, and thus can continue to effectively implement policy innovations over time. It is the very “loosely coupled” nature of educational bureaucracies, in general, and the CSDE, in particular, that created an environment conducive to entrepreneurs who creatively subverted traditional bureaucratic hierarchical and authority structures to pursue their own agendas. Furthermore, there are certain characteristics of entrepreneurs that enable them to persist as instigators of constructive social actions in the face of shifting political and economic conditions. “Less affiliative than most people, they pursue ideals and visions rather than popularity.

Although they may enjoy praise, they do not rely on recognition to keep them moving forward. They take a degree of comfort in being marginal” (Roberts and King, 1996, p. 146).

There is a Strong Role to be Played by State Departments of Education in Shaping Public Policy

In the mid-1980s, states were at the center of efforts to reform public education. By the early and mid-1990s, the role of state departments of education in some states had become very uncertain, as state agency staffing and funding were decreased and proponents of market choice in education through vouchers, charter schools, and contracting out public school services simultaneously were advocating for more local and parental control of education (Chubb and Moe, 1990; Hill, Pierce and Guthrie, 1997). Although CSDE staffing and state appropriations for education declined in the early 1990s due to the economic recession, legislative support for public education in Connecticut remained strong, and state programs and policies were largely left intact. As a CSDE staff member recently commented about the current Commissioner of Education, Theodore Sergi, “he’s earned the respect of everybody, so there still is a belief that the Department of Education is a repository of honest, good ideas and the ability to implement legislation. And the credibility—that trust and respect—is critical.” A State Board of Education member similarly commented, “Right now, Ted [Sergi] has a wonderful relationship with the Governor. He listens to his input.”

This case study suggests that, in the face of increasingly contentious political dialog around the role and nature of public education and pressures on local school districts to perform, state departments of education have an even more crucial mission in unifying competing interests around common goals of setting high performance standards for student achievement and rectifying inequities in educational opportunity. As Timar (1997) has noted, large scale institutional reform is unlikely in the absence of an institutional center to shape policy, aggregate interests, and control and channel conflict. This is why the contrast between the successful EEA reforms and the unsuccessful CEEC agenda is so instructive. The CSDE played a major leadership role in shaping the policies and building the political support for the reforms that emerged in the EEA of 1986. In contrast, the agency gave only limited attention and minor staff support to the politically fragmented, business interest-driven CEEC, which failed to articulate a coherent education agenda or garner sufficient support among competing, contentious special interests to pass major reform legislation. The Connecticut case study suggests that, given strong leadership at different levels of the agency, capacity in terms of resources and talented agency personnel, and the building of a credible presence in education policy over time, a state education agency can be a powerful influence on educational policy.

One of the unanswered questions of this research is, how long can the momentum of the CSDE be sustained in continuing to develop and implement policy innovations? As noted earlier, the recession of the early 1990s took its toll on the agency, as hiring of new staff was severely curtailed and several early retirement incentive plans accelerated the departure of highly experienced, talented individuals who had participated in setting the

agenda for the EEA reforms. Current Commissioner of Education, Theodore S. Sergi, recently commented, "I think about the next generation of people—they're not really readily available." One agency consultant lamented, "I think the day Gerry [Tirozzi] decided he wanted to become president of the University of Connecticut... was the day this department peaked." On the other hand, he commented further, "Even piecemeal, hit or miss, there's a whole bunch of neat stuff [here]. We still have a growing and one of the finest state assessment programs in the country.... We've got the best [people] pushing that in some wonderful ways." Another agency manager commented, "I think the real payoff of the 1980s is the 1990s, and what we're going to do beyond the year 2000." This statement suggests that it may take more than a decade to realize the effects of any major education reform initiative, and that building leadership and capacity within the state agency is critically important to sustaining the momentum and direction of those reforms over time, particularly when political leadership shifts.

Implications for the Study of Education Policy

Increasing standards for teachers has been an integral component of Connecticut's education reform agenda for the past two decades. As this case study illustrates, the statutory framework of the EEA of 1986 has enabled CSDE staff to create highly innovative teacher assessments and a comprehensive state-sponsored teacher induction program that have captured national attention and are only now being considered for adoption in other states. Furthermore, Connecticut's teacher standards and assessments

have been used as policy tools to improve both teaching and student learning. The idea that the success of education reform initiatives is linked to increasing the quality and effectiveness of teachers is not new. For example, the Carnegie Forum's 1986 report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, declared that, "...Americans have not yet fully recognized two essential truths: First, that success depends on achieving far more demanding educational standards than we have ever attempted to reach before, and, second, that the key to success lies in creating a profession equal to the task—a profession of well-educated teachers prepared to assume new powers and responsibilities to redesign schools for the future" (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986, p. 2). A decade later, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future released its report, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*. The message is essentially the same. "America's future depends now, as never before, on our ability to teach. If every citizen is to be prepared for a democratic society whose major product is knowledge, every teacher must know how to teach students in ways that help them reach high levels of intellectual and social competency" (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, p. 3).

While consensus is growing that improvement in teaching is a critical component in education reform,² considerable controversy exists over whether there should be more centralized control over policies that impact teacher quality, whether there should be more

² The Education Trust, a Washington-based education organization committed to improving institutions serving Latino, African American, Native American and low-income students, cited in its summer, 1998, report, *Good Teaching Matters—How Well Qualified Teachers Can Close the Gap*, that several recent studies had indicated that gaps in student achievement could be reduced by staffing schools with more qualified teachers.

localized control, or whether the teaching profession itself should be given more autonomy and participation in policy development. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future recommends that decision-making power over the teaching profession be shifted away from state education agencies and local school boards towards private professional organizations such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), and the Interstate New Teacher Support and Assessment Consortium (INTASC). The BEST Program, Connecticut's comprehensive induction program of support and assessment for new teachers, offers an approach to accountability for teachers which lies somewhere in between a "political" and "professional" model.³ It bridges this dichotomy by integrating the state's authorized and accepted role to license teachers with practitioner participation in the development as well as implementation of the teacher licensing process.

This research has focused on shaping of state education policy related to Connecticut's teacher standards initiatives, not on the outcome of those initiatives in terms of improving student achievement. An important question remains unanswered as to the long-term effects of more stringent teacher licensing requirements on teacher quality as well as the extent to which it positively impacts student achievement. Economists such as Ballou and Podgursky (1997) have suggested that stricter licensing and teacher

³ As noted in Chapter One, political model of accountability assumes that the larger community and its elected representatives have a right not only to hold public institutions answerable, but to circumscribe or control their behavior. A professional model, in contrast, assumes that members of an occupation possess specialized knowledge and that, because their work poses complex and non-routine problems, they should be regulated by a code of ethics internal to the profession and be autonomous from external political control (McDonnell, 1994).

preparation program accreditation standards may actually act as disincentives or barriers to market entry. By raising significantly the time and money that prospective teachers are asked to invest in their careers, some potentially qualified applicants allegedly will be deterred from pursuing teaching careers. "The testimony of countless beginning teachers reminds us that teaching is what economists call an 'experience good'—it is hard to know whether one will like it without trying it. It is not, in short, the kind of career where it makes a great deal of sense to erect high barriers before entrants have a chance to find out whether teaching is for them" (p. 39). Anecdotal data from school superintendents as well as CSDE studies of teacher supply and demand suggest the opposite—that higher standards and higher salaries have increased the quality of the pool of teacher candidates. As Frank Yulo, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, was recently quoted as saying, "'In the 1970s, we hired warm bodies.... They would interview us and we would be thrilled to get them to sign on the bottom line. Now we get many qualified outstanding candidates... For every two or three jobs, we get a couple of hundred applicants. Higher salaries have enticed people into the profession'" (Flax, 1997, p. 82). Nonetheless, more research needs to be conducted to answer two major questions: (1) whether the teaching practices promoted through the state's beginning teacher assessments result in the higher achievement of students, and (2) the extent to which changing expectations for the teaching performance of beginning teachers has impacted practices of the veteran teachers who serve as assessors and mentors of beginning teachers.

Implications for the Study of Public Policy

The Connecticut case study is illustrative of how a bureaucratic agency can be highly influential in setting statewide policy in a state whose political culture places a strong premium on local control. Connecticut's success in implementing policies such as its teacher standards initiatives and extensive student assessment programs has been on the strength of arguments put forth for the importance of equity and excellence in education, rather than in highly regulatory policies like those implemented in Kentucky that provide tangible consequences for compliance (monetary incentives) or noncompliance (sanctions). The "Kentucky model" provided the framework for the CEEC's reform agenda, which suggests that another reason for the failure of the CEEC reform agenda may lie in the fact that its reform recommendations ran counter to the state's political culture.

As noted at the beginning of this study, states have assumed much greater responsibility over the past two decades for social policies such as education and welfare reform and economic development—partly in response to the Reagan's New Federalism, partly in response to the public's general distrust of big government.⁴ If one adopts the view, however, that policy adoption is linked to the strength of argument or that ideas have the power to influence the political process, then institutions such as state agencies can become powerful political actors if staffed by individuals who function as policy entrepreneurs. As Fuhrman (1993) notes:

⁴ It should be noted that perceptions of "big government" can occur at any level—federal, state or local.

It may be that as parties continue to weaken and as fragmentation related to candidate-centered politics and specialization increases, ideas become more important as a source of cohesion or glue. Ideas form a rallying point, a foundation for the formation of coalitions, one of the few remaining bases for unified action. Also, as policymaking becomes more complex and encompasses more technical and specific areas, the role played by experts who generate policy ideas increases (p. 16).

If states as institutions seek to mediate political struggles by defining values and beliefs, then policy instruments must be chosen that rely less on mandates and more on inducements and symbolic or “horatory” instruments. This case study illustrates how Connecticut has used accountability mechanisms such as assessment and reporting to motivate the public to press for improvement in the performance of students and to reduce the gap in achievement between the highest and lowest performing schools. Furthermore, the BEST Program is a particularly illustrative example of how states can combine different policy tools to raise standards not only for beginning teachers, but for veteran teachers. This beginning teacher induction program of support and assessment combines the state’s coercive power through its authority to license teachers with *incentives* (providing money to school districts to support the induction of new teachers as well as making available statewide quality professional development), *capacity-building* (training large numbers of beginning and experienced educators to understand principles of effective teaching practice as reflected in state teacher standards and assessments), and *system-changing* mechanisms (placing teacher licensing decisions in the hands of practitioners trained by the state to assess beginning teachers, aligning state standards for approval of teacher preparation institutions with licensing standards for beginning

teachers, and issuing state guidelines for local district evaluation of veteran teachers that reflect state standards for teachers).

Areas for Further Research

There is no question that further research is needed into the roles of state education departments in developing and implementing policies. While it is generally acknowledged that agency bureaucrats often work behind the scenes with legislators and other interest groups in crafting policy agendas, the extent to which state education agency officials and staff members actually function as political actors needs to be examined and studied more extensively. In addition, one needs to examine the functions of state agencies and the roles of staff. What appears to make Connecticut unique is that it has recruited staff with specialized expertise in order to develop a highly sophisticated education indicator reporting system, to conduct research and development in such areas as student and teacher assessment, and to develop and administer complex programs such as the BEST Program—functions often performed in other states by other entities like universities, testing firms, regional service centers or other organizations—or more typically, not done at all. This building of capacity, in turn, has had significant implications in terms of the ability of the CSDE to influence policy and to create an environment and agency culture conducive to bureaucratic entrepreneurship.

The nature of entrepreneurship in the public sector also needs to be studied in more depth. As noted in Chapter Four, there have been studies of “public entrepreneurs” such as Admiral Hyman Rickover, J. Edgar Hoover, and Robert Moses. These

individuals, however, have generally been well-known public figures, not mid-level agency bureaucrats who sometimes alone and sometimes part of a team have performed similar functions of exercising leadership and mobilizing resources and political support. Government leaders who function as "policy entrepreneurs" are sometimes more visible, an example being former Vermont Commissioner of Education Richard Mills, who was specifically recruited by the State Board of Education to create a reform vision for the state (Lusi, 1997). When an entrepreneurial vision rests in one individual, however, the question arises as to whether resulting policy innovations will be sustained over time. The Connecticut case study suggests that, if the phenomenon of bureaucratic entrepreneurship is as much a process and matter of teamwork as the work of any one individual and that it is learned behavior, then creating an environment conducive to bureaucratic entrepreneurship becomes a crucial factor in sustaining policy innovation over time. Further research is needed to strengthen this hypothesis.

Another important area of research is policy diffusion of innovations. A central question is whether Connecticut's model for licensing and inducting beginning teachers can be adopted by other states. Currently, eleven states, of which Connecticut is one, are participating in the Performance Assessment Development Project sponsored by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), a program of the Council of Chief State School Officers. Connecticut was one of the charter founders of INTASC (along with California, which no longer participates in the teacher assessment development initiative), and Connecticut's previous work has guided the INTASC teacher portfolio development project. INTASC's mission is to provide opportunities for

collaboration in development projects such as the development of teacher assessments and promote the diffusion of policies related to teacher preparation, licensing and professional development among states. Connecticut is currently in the process of formalizing a collaborative relationship with Indiana for purposes of assisting that state in implementing the Connecticut model for teacher induction and licensing system, and other states such as Ohio and North Carolina have also expressed similar interest. A question for further research is whether Connecticut's policies can be adapted in other states. What role in policy adoption and implementation will other state departments of education take? How will capacity be built—both in the state education department and within local school districts—to support complex reform such as this? Where does the source of leadership lie to convince policy makers to provide the necessary fiscal resources to implement a performance-based licensing system for teachers? How will the Connecticut model be adapted to reflect the specific political and cultural context of these states?

In an era of growing public skepticism over the effectiveness of the U.S. public school system and government in general, it is hoped that studies such as this one provide evidence that there is an important role for state education agencies to play in promoting an agenda of educational excellence and equity. Moreover, perhaps a more positive view of government “bureaucrats” as trustees of the public interest will emerge.

APPENDIX A

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The purpose of this appendix is to explain in more detail sources of evidence collected for this case study. Two primary sources of information were used: written documentation and open-ended interviews.

Written Documentation

A wide variety of written documentation was examined in connection with this case study. These included legislation, court decisions, Connecticut State Department of Education policy reports, policy documents written by other organizations, as well as journal and newspaper articles dealing with the events described in this case study. The following is a list of sources that provide the historical background referred to in the main text of this case study.

Legislation

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Public Act 86-1: | An Act Concerning Education Enhancement. |
| Public Act 86-147 | An Act Concerning the Phase-in of Testing for Prospective Teachers. |
| Public Act 87-2: | An Act Concerning Revisions in the Education Enhancement Act. |
| Public Act 92-143: | An Act Concerning Educational Excellence for Connecticut. |
| Raised Bill No. 321: | An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Commissions on Educational Excellence for Connecticut. |

Court decisions

- Horton v. Meskill.* 1977. *Connecticut Law Journal*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 42. (April 19).
Horton v. Meskill. 1985. *Connecticut Law Journal* (January 15)
Sheff v. O'Neill. 1992. Pretrial Memoranda and Opening Arguments.
Sheff v. O'Neill. 1995. Memorandum of Decision (April 12).

CSDE policy reports

Connecticut State Board of Education and Connecticut School Finance Advisory Panel. 1979. *A Plan for Promoting Equal Educational Opportunity in Connecticut*. (January).

Connecticut State Board of Education. 1984a. *Connecticut's Challenge: An Agenda for Educational Equity and Excellence* (January 5).

Connecticut State Board of Education. 1984b. *Update: Connecticut's Challenge: Implementation of Recommendations Presented in Connecticut's Challenge: An Agenda for Educational Equity and Excellence*.

Connecticut State Department of Education. 1984. *Final Recommendations of the Certification Advisory Council* (November).

Connecticut State Department of Education. 1985. *Meeting the Challenge: Condition of Education in Connecticut*.

Connecticut State Department of Education. 1986. *Meeting the Challenge: Condition of Education in Connecticut*.

Connecticut State Board of Education. 1992. *The Other Side of the Equation*.

Connecticut State Department of Education. 1993. *Profiles of Our Schools: Condition of Education in Connecticut 1991-92*.

Commission/Task Force Reports

Commission on Educational Excellence. 1994. *Report of the Commission on Educational Excellence in Connecticut* (January 31).

Commission to Study School Finance and Equal Educational Opportunity. 1975. *Financing Connecticut's Schools*. Final Report (January).

Distinguished Citizens Task Force On Quality Teaching. 1983. *A Report of the Distinguished Citizens Task Force on Quality Teaching* (September).

Governor's Commission on Equity and Excellence in Education. 1985. *Teachers for Today & Tomorrow* (June).

Governor's Commission on Quality and Integrated Education. 1990. *Crossing the Bridge to Equality and Excellence: A Vision of Quality and Integrated Education for Connecticut* (December).

Other Policy Reports

Business Roundtable. 1992. *The Essential Components of a Successful Education System: Putting Policy Into Practice* (December).

Connecticut Business for Education Coalition, Inc. 1992. *From Vision to Reality: When Schools Work, Connecticut Works* (May).

Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium. 1988. *The Consortium Report*. Stanford University. Vol. 1, No. 1.

Interviews

Interviews with twenty-eight individuals were conducted between the period of July 1997 and June 1998. These included public figures, whose identities are revealed in this report, as well as individuals who are either present or past CSDE managers or education consultants or school district personnel (teachers, administrators and superintendents) who were influential in guiding Connecticut's reform agenda over the past decade. In addition, several sources requested that their names not be included, because of the current nature of their work and position related to education policy. As a participant-observer, who knew many of these individuals from my professional work, I feel I was privileged that many were particularly candid with me during these interviews. I have, therefore, taken into account the need for confidentiality around the identity of specific individuals in relation to their observations and remarks. Within these parameters, the following is a list of public figures interviewed for this research who are identified in this report by name.

Interviewees (Public Figures Identified in Report)

Dorothy Goodwin	Former legislator and State Board of Education chair; member of the Distinguished Citizen's Task Force and Governor's Commission on Equity and Excellence
Lorraine Aronson	Former Connecticut Deputy Commissioner of Education
Gerald N. Tirozzi	Former Connecticut Commissioner of Education (1983-1991)
Pascal D. Forgione	Former Chief, Office of Research, Evaluation and Assessment
Edward Dorsett	Former Connecticut Education Association President (1986-1988); member Distinguished Citizens Task Force
June Goodman	Former State Board of Education chair; member of Distinguished Citizens Task Force and Governor's Commission on Equity and Excellence
Robert Eagan	Former President, Connecticut Education Association President (1980-86; 1992-96)
Daria Plummer	Connecticut Education Association President (1996-present)
George Springer	President, Connecticut Federation of Educational and Municipal Employees, which was formerly called the Connecticut State Federation of Teachers (1979 to present)
Kevin Sullivan	Connecticut Senate President Pro tem, former co-chair of Education Committee
Vince Ferrandino	Former Connecticut Commissioner of Education (1992-1994); co-chair, Commission on Equity and Excellence in Connecticut
Lauren Kaufman Weisberg	Vice President, Connecticut Business and Industry Association
Timothy Moynihan	President, Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce; former legislator, member of the Governor's Commission on Equity and Excellence and Commission on Equity and Excellence in Connecticut
Arthur Wise	President, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education; former chief consultant to the Governor's Commission on Equity and Excellence

Interviews were open-ended, using several generic protocols, adjusted to an individual's particular position and role. The following are samples of "generic protocols."

Sample Interview Protocol for CSDE Personnel

1. Tell me about your background at the SDE and ways in which you have been actively involved in the formulation of Connecticut's teacher policies?
2. Which individuals or organizations have played key roles in shaping the agenda for Connecticut's teacher policies over the last decade?

What would you describe as the role of key legislators?
What has been the role of Connecticut's teacher unions?
3. How would you describe changes in or the evolution of Connecticut's teacher policies over the last decade?
4. The SDE has used commissions and task forces as part of the formulation of most important Department policies. What is your perception of the importance of these groups, particularly with respect to Connecticut's teacher standards initiatives?
5. Since 1986, there has been only one additional attempt in Connecticut at major education reform: the CEEC. This initiative failed. What would you characterize as the difference between this unsuccessful reform attempt and the EEA of 1986?

Sample Interview Protocol for School District Personnel/other Constituents

1. Tell me about your background as an [educator, business leader, board member, legislator, etc.] in Connecticut and any roles you may have played in formulating statewide education policies, particularly in the area of teacher standards?

2. In your opinion, which individuals or organizations have played key roles in shaping the agenda for Connecticut's teacher policies over the last decade?
 What would you describe as the role of key legislators?
 What has been the role of Connecticut's teacher unions?
 What role have superintendents (principals, teachers) played in this process?
 What role has the business community played in this process?
 What role has the state department of education played?
3. How would you describe changes in or the evolution of Connecticut's teacher policies over the last decade?
4. Has the existence of the BEST Program had a substantial impact on local districts? Is there any evidence that the BEST Program has impacted standards for teachers at the local level?
5. Since 1986, there has been only one additional attempt in Connecticut at major education reform: the CEEC. This initiative failed. You served on one of the working groups for the CEEC. What would you characterize as the difference between this unsuccessful reform attempt and the EEA of 1986?
6. Do you believe that the raising of teacher standards remains an issue for the 1990s for either the education community or the public?

It should be noted that the questions posed to each individual were not always asked in the same order nor same manner. The interview protocol was adjusted in light of an individual's current and past position as well as area of expertise. Tapes and notes were transcribed by the author, as well as coded and sorted into categories. Broad coding categories included the following: environment (political, economic, other); leadership (commissioner, state board of education, agency, other); roles and influence (teachers, administrators, unions, business, legislators, public, commissions, national); organizational capacity; innovation/entrepreneurship; empowerment; ideas; policy windows; change; and intergovernmental relations. Coding and sorting was done by hand,

rather than by computer program (despite having purchased state-of-the-art software for qualitative data analysis). The reason is that, given the highly qualitative nature of the data and the fact that the author conducted, recorded and transcribed each interview herself, the author was so familiar with the data, that little was to be gained by transferring the data into a computer program for sorting and analysis. In fact, the author frequently returned to the originally transcribed notes to examine specific coded data within the context of the larger discussion of issues.

APPENDIX B

MEMBERSHIP OF THE DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS TASK FORCE ON QUALITY TEACHING

Fernando Comulada	Connecticut Bank and Trust
Maxine Dean	Connecticut National Bank
Edward Dorsett	Nonnewaug High School, Woodbury
Edwin G. Eigel, Jr.	University of Bridgeport
Jack Goldman	Xerox Corporation
June Goodman	Chairperson, State Board of Education
Dorothy C. Goodwin	Connecticut State Representative
Adele Gordon	Connecticut Association of Boards of Education
Betty R. Hollander	Omega Engineering, Inc.
Sandra Johnson	Laurel School, Bloomfield
Sharon Lynn Kagan	Yale University
Hernan LaFontaine	Superintendent of Schools, Hartford
Mary Alice McNaboe	Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce
Cornelius O'Leary	Connecticut State Senator

APPENDIX C

MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Timothy J. Moynihan, Co-Chair	Connecticut State Representative
Dean E. Wolcott	Division President, Aetna Life & Casualty
William Bradley	Former President, Hazen Foundation
Lynn Alan Brooks	Vice President, Connecticut General Life Insurance Co.
Colin G. Campbell	President, Wesleyan University
M. Adela Eads	Connecticut State Senator
Harry Fishman	Former Asst. Professor, Fairfield University
June K. Goodman	Former Chairwoman, State Board of Education
Dorothy C. Goodwin, Ex-Officio Member	Former Co-chair, Education Committee, General Assembly
William M. Griffin	Exec. Vice President, Hartford Insurance Group
Leroy E. Hay	1983 National Teacher of the Year, Manchester
Eugene D. Jones	Sr. Vice President, Grenier Engineer Sciences, Inc.
Sheila McCarthy	Smith Insurance, Inc.
Ramon Pacheco	Attorney
Marilyn Roche	Connecticut State Representative
Richard F. Schneller	Former Connecticut State Senator
Ruth L. Sims	Former First Selectman, Greenwich, CT
Gerald N. Tirozzi, Ex-officio Member	Connecticut Commissioner of Education
Alfred W. Van Sinderen	Chairman, Southern New England Telephone Company

APPENDIX D

NINE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES FOR A SUCCESSFUL EDUCATION SYSTEM

(adopted by Business Roundtable in September, 1990)

1. A successful education system operates on four assumptions:
 - *Every student can learn at significantly higher levels;*
 - *Every student can be taught successfully;*
 - *High expectations for every student are reflected in curriculum content, though instructional strategies may vary; and*
 - *Every student and every preschool child needs an advocate—preferably a parent.*
2. A successful system is performance or outcome based.
3. A successful system uses assessment strategies as strong and rich as the outcomes.
4. A successful system rewards schools for success, helps schools in trouble, and penalized schools for persistent or dramatic failure.
5. A successful system gives school-based staff a major role in instructional decisions.
6. A successful system emphasizes staff development.
7. A successful system provides high-quality prekindergarten programs, at least for every disadvantaged child.
8. A successful system provides health and other social services sufficient to reduce significant barriers to learning.
9. A successful system uses technology to raise student and teacher productivity and expand access to learning.

APPENDIX E

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY IN CONNECTICUT

Vincent L. Ferrandino, Commissioner, State Dept. of Education <i>Co-chair</i>	Mark Cohen Principal Farmington High School	Annaliz Hannon Sr. Dir., Corporate Affairs U.S. Surgical Corp.	Timothy J. Moynihan President Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce
William J. Connolly President and CEO ABB Business Services <i>Co-chair</i>	Annette Cohen Vice President Marcon Capital	Raymond A. Jansen Publisher & CEO Hartford Courant	David Mulholand President CT Federation of School Administrators
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Elaine Zimmerman Acting Exec. Director Commission on Children			

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